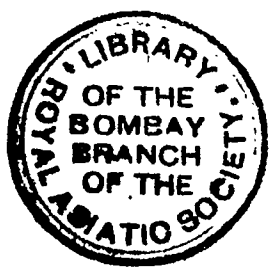
00027429

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

OUR ALLIES OF THE FUTURE.



LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

GAUL OR TEUTON?

CONSIDERATIONS

AS TO

OUR ALLIES OF THE FUTURE.

27429 a2

BY

LORD DUNSANY.

RR e 82

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1873.

All rights reserved.

944-01
Dun/Gau
27429

PREFACE.

SUFFICIENT TIME has now elapsed since the stirring events of 1870–1 to admit of calm and impartial judgments upon their nature and results. Few events in modern history seem more likely to produce great and lasting effects upon the destinies of mankind than those we have so recently witnessed, and which will be considered in the following pages

It was perhaps inevitable that when Germany had achieved a triumph as unexampled as it was unexpected public opinion should be directed to the anticipated policy of the victor rather than to the baffled designs of the vanquished. Yet the result has been a great injustice to Germany, whose acts have been judged without sufficient reference to the provocation she had received, or to the aggressive policy on the part of France, which may be summed up in the word Napoleonism. The absolute incompatibility with European peace of the whole system expressed by that word would have needed no proof if only the French aggression upon Germany had been successful. The situation of France in the face of Europe would then have spoken for itself, and it would have been impos-

sible to have maintained the policy of any alliance between a pacific England and a domineering France.

Let anyone consider what would have been the political position of Europe had France been successful in the struggle which history will record as the 'War for the Rhine.' The Emperor Napoleon III., installed as conqueror at Berlin, would have occupied the position of Napoleon I. after Jena. Each having previously beaten Austria and Russia, would have had no undefeated rival except England, and Europe (for the time at least) would have had to receive the law from France. The situation of England again in 1870 would have been the same as in 1806, minus the reality of naval supremacy and the prestige of recent naval victories. As soon as British Chauvinism had realised the fact that the unexplained designs and the better naval administration of France had given her a navy practically equal to our own, friendly feelings would have given way to suspicion and alarm. If it be said that though the circumstances of the two Napoleons might have been the same, their characters were very different, the incident of the 'Belgian Project' suggests that their political morality was nearly on a level.

But the issue of the war having baffled the designs of France, people somewhat unfairly forgot that Germany was entitled to look at French policy as it was planned, and not as it was altered by events.

On the other hand, it was very natural that Englishmen should feel deep sympathy for a country stricken by defeats unexampled in history. No generous mind could have failed to hope, under its first impulse of

pity, that the clemency of the victors of Sedan would be commensurate with their success, leaving both without any parallel in history. But that clemency would have been more generous than wise, for France had not yet learned to loathe Napoleonism even after Sedan. The Napoleonic legend still survived, and one victory would have fatally restored its pernicious vigour. To the fact that Germany followed up Sedan with its hundred thousand prisoners, by Metz with twice that number, and Paris with four times as many, Europe owes the destruction of Napoleonism, its greatest curse and danger. If, then, deliverance from the distorted and immoral traditions which deluged Europe with blood for the gratification of French vain-glory be a service to humanity, Germany is entitled to the gratitude of mankind. The continental nations owe her the first tribute, England owes her the second, if indeed France herself does not benefit in a greater degree. To Germany France owes her emancipation from that personal rule whose debasing and enervating effects she now acknowledges and deplores. The right of self-government and the dignity of a really free people are cheaply purchased at the price of a military supremacy for which France is morally unfit. That unfitness has been at all times too manifest in French history. It was very recently displayed in the reliance of the late Emperor upon an iniquitous seizure of Belgium, a friendly and allied state, as the means of strengthening his own popularity.

Feelings of friendship to a recent ally may naturally affect Englishmen; but we should remember that in most continental wars we are only spectators of the

strife, and it is not our part to indulge in sentimental preferences that may prove fatal to other nations. If French domination be unfavourable to the peace of Europe, as history proves it to have been, that fact should be decisive for us. Such is the opinion of the best continental writers, and one of the best known (M. Laveleye) thus writes in an English periodical published since these sheets went to press:

'The various Governments that have succeeded each other in France have always been too ready to divert the attention of the country from home to foreign affairs. They insist on maintaining their "legitimate influence," that is, on domineering over their neighbours. The Restoration makes the Spanish war; the peaceful Louis Philippe occupies Ancona, and suffers himself to be driven to the very brink of a general war, in order to maintain the Viceroy of Egypt; M. Guizot insists on interfering in Switzerland to assist the Jesuits; Finally, Napoleon III. undertakes the Crimean War for a monks' squabble, the Italian War for an idea, the expedition to Rome for the defence of the Pope, that of Mexico for the exaltation of the Latin race, and finally, the War with Prussia for no reason at all.'*

Such is the view of a calm and impartial authority favourably known in England by his works; and it gives the present writer some confidence in his own conclusions upon several points, to find that they are shared by M. Laveleye. Especially does that eminent statis-

* An article in the February No. of 'The Fortnightly,' entitled 'Causes of War in the existing European Situation.'

tician agree in the opinion that a Russo-French alliance is a serious danger of the future, that Germany is by nature pacific, and that the traditional policy of England points to a German rather than a French alliance.

That a German alliance should be the basis of our foreign relations seems, indeed, hardly doubtful; whether it could be so enlarged as to greatly consolidate the power of the pacific States as argued in these pages, the reader must decide.

The writer makes no pretension to support his views by new evidence or by authorities little known. After reading much that has been written on both sides of the question, he has generally quoted the writers best known or within everybody's reach, seeking rather to collect known facts and present them as links in one chain of argument than to adduce fresh evidence, which might itself be questioned.

The author owes especial thanks to the proprietors of 'The Graphic,' by whose kind permission he is enabled to reproduce the famous 'Project of Treaty' fac-simile.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Public Opinion in England on the late War	1
II.	The Causes of the War of 1870	28
III.	The Conditions of the late Peace	59
IV.	France and Germany after the Peace	85
V.	M. Thiers	128
VI.	Count Benedetti	164
VII.	Retrospect of the Anglo-French Alliance	187
VIII.	Prospects of a new Anglo-French Alliance	219
IX.	The Eastern Question	244
X.	Conclusion	275
	Appendix	305

notamment, a
les cas où leur
dont elles se
mutuellement
usences d'une
pour lieu, en
de prendre dans
decliner dans
arrangements
commandes
conformément
prescriptions et

Fac-simile of Draft of Secret Treaty between France and Prussia, 1867.
ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL

Projet Grundakte.

S. M. le Roi de Suisse et S. M. l'Empereur des Français, reconnaissant utile de resserrer les liens d'amitié qui les unissent et de consolider les rapports de bon voisinage heureusement existant entre les deux pays, convaincus d'autre part que pour atteindre ce résultat, propre d'ailleurs à assurer le maintien de la paix générale, il leur importe de s'entendre sur les questions qui intéressent leurs relations futures, ont résolu de conclure un traité à cet effet, et nommé en conséquence pour leurs Plénipotentiaires, savoir

S. M. le Roi de Suisse

S. M. l'Empereur des Français

Les quels, après avoir échangé leurs pleins pouvoirs trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivants:

Art. 1

S. M. l'Empereur des Français donne et reconnait les acquisitions que la Suisse a faites à la suite de la dernière guerre qu'elle a soutenue contre

l'Autriche et contre les alliés ainsi que les arrangements pris ou à prendre pour la constitution d'une confédération dans l'Allemagne du Nord, s'engageant en même temps à prêter son appui à la consolidation de cette œuvre.]

Art. II

S. M. le Roi de Prusse promet de faciliter à la France l'acquisition du Luxembourg; à cet effet la dite Majesté entrera en négociations avec S. M. le Roi des Pays Bas pour le déterminer à faire, à l'Empereur des Français, la cession de ses droits souverains sur ce Duché, moyennant telle compensation qui sera jugée suffisante ou autrement. ~~De son côté l'Empereur des Français s'engage à assumer les charges pécuniaires que cette transaction peut comporter.~~

(Pour faciliter cette transaction, l'Empereur des Français de son côté, s'engage à assumer exclusivement les charges pécuniaires qu'elle pourrait comporter)

Art. III

S. M. l'Empereur des Français ne s'opposera pas à une union fédérale de la confédération du Nord avec les

Etats de midi de l'Allemagne à l'exception des Autriche; la quelle union pourra être basée sur un parlement commun, tout en respectant dans une juste mesure, la souveraineté des dits Etats.

Art IV.

De son côté S.M. le Roi de Prusse, auquel S. M. l'Empereur des français donnait aussi par les circonstances à faire entrer des troupes en Belgique ou à la conquérir, accordera le concours de son armée à la France et la soutiendra avec toutes ses forces de terre et de mer, envers et contre toute puissance qui, dans cette éventualité lui déclarerait la guerre.

Art V.

Pour assurer l'entière exécution des dispositions qui précèdent, S. M. le Roi de Prusse et S. M. l'Empereur des français contractent, par le présent traité, une alliance offensive et défensive qu'ils s'engagent solennellement à maintenir; — S. S. M M. s'obligent, en outre et

notamment, à l'observer dans tous
les cas où leurs États respectifs,
tout Alliés de plusieurs d'entre
eux, seraient menacés d'une agression, se tenant
pour liés, en pareille conjoncture,
de prendre sans retard, et de me
décliner pour aucun prétexte, les
arrangements militaires qui seraient
commandés par leur intérêt commun
conformément aux clauses et
dispositions ci-dessus énoncées.

GAUL OR TEUTON.

CHAPTER I.

PUBLIC OPINION IN ENGLAND ON THE LATE WAR.

THE title chosen for this book may appear too ambitious, as though encroaching on the province of professional diplomatists, or responsible statesmen. No such ambitious idea, however, suggested these pages. They only aim at a contribution, however humble, towards a just appreciation of the vast change which has just taken place in Europe, and the corresponding change which it must produce in the foreign relations of England. In proportion as correct and impartial views of the recent contest, its causes and results, prevail among us, there will be a healthy public opinion influencing the foreign policy of England, and securing us from such popular follies as lately impelled France to her ruin.

It is given to few, of course, to guide or even influence public opinion; yet as the loudest shout of a multitude is, after all, but the aggregate of single voices, so each person contributes more or less to what we call the public opinion of the country.

Englishmen do not much concern themselves now-a-

days with foreign politics, though no people are more strongly moved by acts of violence and oppression wherever they may occur. So far as leaving continental nations to settle their own disputes without too readily fancying that our honour or interests are concerned therein, this indifference to foreign politics is wise. But as we are occasionally stirred up, if not to action, to strong speaking and writing, it would be well that we should judge foreign questions less as mere episodes, and more as what they are—portions of a nation's history: portions of that history which is itself the outgrowth of national character, feelings, and traditions reappearing from time to time, and reproducing similar results. The same national characteristics which supported the unjust and ruinous wars of Louis XIV. and of the First Napoleon, which restored the Bonaparte dynasty in 1851, and may some day restore it again—those characteristics which led to the Russian, the Austrian, the Mexican* wars, led just as naturally and inevitably to the 'War for the Rhine' in 1870.

To judge that war fairly, we should consider not only its causes and antecedents, but the intentions with which it was declared and the results that would have followed had those intentions been carried into effect. For the military qualities and traditions of France, and the fact that success begets success, led her to expect that as Russia and Austria had been humbled by her arms, so also would be Prussia. The event disappointed this expectation, but we should not on that account look only at the evils

* It may strike the reader that the Russian war was as much English as French, and that the Mexican war was not popular in France; yet both originated in the evil traditions of a French predominance everywhere. The French quarrel with Russia was about the 'Holy Sepulchre' far more than about Turkey; the Mexican war grew out of the absurd but truly Napoleonic idea of 'supporting the 'Latin race against the growing power of the Anglo-Saxon!'

which France suffered from her defeat, forgetting those which would have followed from her victory.

There is every reason to believe that the success of the French arms in 1870 would have endangered the peace and independence of continental Europe, injured the best interests of England, and fatally compromised the future of France herself; for the position of Napoleon III. would have resembled that of Napoleon I. before his reverses. Of the four allies who subjugated France in 1815, three would have succumbed. The burning desire to 'avenge Waterloo' would have been three-fourths fulfilled: England alone would have stood erect and unassailed—for how long? As to France herself—with the Napoleonic legend rehabilitated, Cæsarism and the military glorified, but the nation and its liberty suppressed—she would have awaited the inevitable coalition of Europe against her, and a new subjugation in which the leniency of 1815 might not have been repeated.

It is not because events took another turn that we should forget all this, or think it due to national good will to suppress the truth. The consequences of the war of 1870 are not all in the past, nor do they affect France alone, or else we might be generous to her without being unjust to her adversary. But whatever be due to friends in misfortune, more is due to TRUTH, and it is highly desirable that public opinion in England should be founded on the facts, and warped neither by friendship, nor by prejudice, nor yet by the use of conventional phrases. Among such phrases none have been more misleading than 'Balance of power,' 'A strong France is a Euro-'pean necessity,' 'Our old ally,' 'Our faithful ally.' France has been described as 'under the dominion of 'four phrases.' England should avoid such a domination.

What is meant by those who think the 'balance of 'power' *destroyed* by the victory of Germany? Would

the victory of France have saved it, or would European *equilibrium* consist with French *preponderance?* It is a contradiction in terms.

As regards the necessity to Europe of a 'strong 'France,' as the phrase was used by a statesman of repute, it was probably right in the sense intended by him. But Europe was cursed with a 'strong France' under Louis XIV., and again under Napoleon I. The slaughter (which actually amounted to millions), the devastation, and the misery caused by a strong France only ceased when on each occasion a *weak* France succeeded a strong. There may be instances on the other side, but they are less modern and less known.

Again, much has been said about France as 'our 'old ally.' In truth, France was no more our ally in 1870-71 than Prussia, Austria, or Russia, and was less than any our *old* ally. We have had many treaties of alliance with all four Powers, and it is only in a loose and popular sense that one is more our ally than the rest.

Lastly, as to 'our faithful ally,' were it not that her loyalty 'of forty years' was put forward by M. Thiers as claiming our gratitude, and that Englishmen have used the argument also, one would rather not rake up old quarrels and misdeeds at this time. But the argument was ill-chosen, as any one will see whose memory extends over the forty years.

During the first twenty-five years of the alliance commenced in 1830, and for many years previously, the strongest political sentiment in France was animosity to England,—animosity arising from the same cause and as virulent as that now existing towards Prussia. It showed itself in the daily libels of the press and the tribune, and pervaded French society from the steps of the throne to the hovel of the peasant, and was, in fact, considered a test of French patriotism. That ill-will

towards England (then the only ally of France) was not only the difficulty in her foreign, but also in her domestic policy, and materially tended to overthrow the Orleans monarchy. The 'envy, hatred, and malice' of our neighbour was as well known in England as any other political fact; and no one has ever doubted that at least nine-tenths of our naval and military preparations, and all our fortifications and other precautions against invasion, were directed against our 'faithful ally.' It is equally a matter of fact that, although we did conjointly carry through several difficult negociations, and even military operations, during the reign of Louis Philippe, we were on several occasions deceived and overreached by our ally. This was notably the case in 1840, when we were compelled to call in Russia even to counteract the Egyptian intrigues of France, then, as now, under the virtual rule of M. Thiers.

The English statesman who was the greatest supporter of the Anglo-French alliance, and who necessarily knew most about its operation, thus writes to the British Ambassador in Paris:—

'It has long been evident that the French Govern-
'ment has been deceiving us about the affair of Buenos
'Ayres, as they have done about almost every other
'matter in which we have had any communication with
'them,—such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, Tunis, Turkey
'and Egypt, Persia, &c., upon all of which their language
'and conduct have been directly at variance.'*

Lord Palmerston does not include, in the somewhat long list of instances, the affair of Belgium, when more than once the suspicious conduct of France caused him to threaten war. It may indeed be said that Lord Palmerston's judgment of the French Government here

* *The Life of Lord Palmerston*, by Sir H. Lytton Bulwer, K.C.B. M.P., vol. ii. p. 310. The letter is dated April 16, 1840.

is harsh; but six years later it would with good reason have been harsher, when Louis Philippe's duplicity about the Spanish marriage practically suspended all friendly intercourse with him.

Upon the change of dynasty a few years later, the naval activity of the ex-Emperor, which gave France for a time a larger available fleet than our own,* caused some anxiety in England. In fact, so varying were the relations of the two countries that at least three distinct alarms of invasion—recorded in the title of Mr. Cobden's famous pamphlet as '*The Three Panics*'—occurred. Ministers, in compliance with the general feeling and with their own knowledge of the circumstances, passed a Militia Bill, obtained a vote of 9,000,000*l.* (an instalment only) for fortifications at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Portland, Isle of Wight, and other places, and greatly increased our Channel Fleet. The Volunteer force also testified to the alarm felt; and each and all of these precautions were taken confessedly against a French invasion. Mr. Cobden, indeed, and the Peace Society denied the necessity of precautions, but one of two conclusions must be true,—either they were required by the conduct of France, or the British nation was frightened at a shadow. As the Government and nation concurred in differing with the Peace Society's view, the former were probably right.

* The First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Charles Wood, on May 18, 1857, after giving the relative forces of efficient line-of-battle ships as 42 English to 40 French, thus spoke:—'We stand at a 'great disadvantage with other nations so far as the immediate manning 'of our Navy is concerned, because, while ours is a voluntary service, 'other nations can, by their systems of compulsory service, put on board 'their fleets in a very short time a number of men much larger than we 'could hope to bring together by our volunteer systems.' Is it any wonder that 'panics' should arise when such confessions are made?—*Hansard's Debates*, vol. cxlv.

On the other hand, the French ex-Emperor acted honourably to England upon two occasions, as will be mentioned hereafter; but he subsequently lost by the Benedetti treachery all right to the name of a 'faithful 'ally.' It is only by getting rid of these conventional phrases that any question can be fairly judged.

Though the war is ended, its consequences will endure, and they are too momentous to be judged carelessly or under the influence of sentiment, which for reasons quite independent of politics will be favourable to France. Indeed, to judge fairly between France and Prussia, most Englishmen must put some constraint upon their feelings and preferences. France is far more popular in England than is Germany, or than England is in France. Few Englishmen are without agreeable recollections of that 'pleasant land of France,' its gay and amiable people. Prussia, on the other hand, is not a pleasing country, and its inhabitants seem desirous of distinguishing themselves from other Germans by less of courtesy and amenity; in fact, by an offensive arrogance of manner. In this they do themselves great injustice; courtesy and mildness in peace are the true accompaniments and graces of prowess in war. Who can imagine a rude King Arthur or Bayard? Who does not think the valour of our Black Prince enhanced by his courteous deference to his Royal captive after Poictiers?

Having got rid of conventional phrases, then, and of natural but misleading preferences, we might judge more fairly what may prove to have been the greatest facts of our times and the turning points in modern history. We should then find ourselves confronted by these primary facts inviting our judgment. First, the declaration of war by France against the advice of her best ally and the opinion of some of her best statesmen. Second, the attempted invasion of Prussia by a Napoleon who had made himself the organ of 'the Napoleonic

'ideas,' and who had professed his desire to 'tear up 'the treaties of 1815.' Third, the declaration of the French Minister, M. Olivier, that he entered upon the war 'with lightness of heart,' and the rejoicings in Paris at a war from which the French people generally hoped to gain, at least, the Rhine provinces.

Upon these primary facts and their consequences the British public, or at least a large section of it, may be said to have formed too hasty a judgment, and one which, though the war is over, may well demand further consideration. It is a narrow view which can see in France alone an 'old ally,' and can conceive no other guarantee for European peace than her military supremacy. Prussia was our ally against France in the middle of last century in the most glorious war we ever waged.* Prussia was our ally, and against France too, in the beginning of this century; and if we do justice to the loyalty of our French ally in the Crimea, we must not forget the still more signal loyalty of our Prussian ally on the more important field of Waterloo.

The supremacy of any nation whose traditions are warlike—not to say aggressive—whose character is fickle, vainglorious and restless, does not offer the best guarantee for the general peace. The very claim put forward for French supremacy is in fact its strongest condemnation. 'When France is content, Europe is at peace' (and then only of course). But ought Europe to hold the lives, the fortunes, the happiness of its populations at the will and caprice of the least stable and most restless of nations? Ought not France to learn to reverse her favourite maxim, and say, 'When Europe is at 'peace, France is content?' Assuredly, if all the elements of material happiness could render a nation content, France ought to be so. A country blessed with high fertility, with every kind of produce, with 'corn and oil and

* The Seven Years' War.

'wine' the best that Europe produces, a genial climate, and in the south, a district that in its growth of tropical fruits, its oranges, its pomegranates, its palms, its aloes and cassia, seems to be a strip of Africa drifted across the seas to Europe. A soil on which the spectator sees three crops ripening on the same ground—a land, which may be called 'the glory of all lands,' and which, to complete the picture of happiness, as our land reformers would draw it, is owned by those who till the soil, and whose numbers do not yet touch the limit where population encroaches upon the means of subsistence. But this France, blessed as no other country is blessed with natural advantages, and with a population active, intelligent, thrifty, and laborious, sought to revive a domination for which she is unfitted from want of political education and respect for the rights of others. She sought to appropriate territory also to which she had no better claim than to Kent.

Many Englishmen condemn the supposed ambition of Prussia, and dread a new Napoleon in the Emperor William. That fear may or may not prove to be well founded, though the grounds for it will appear but slight on examination. As to the ambition of Prussia, we must remember that she is one member only of that formidable Empire which has given such proof of its prowess, and that the Germans in general are not equally addicted to war. Of the Emperor one fact must be admitted by friends and foes alike. He is now seventy-five years of age; if he is a lover of war his time for it must be short, and his heir, though a well-tried warrior also, is known to love peace. 'Behind a *brighter* hour ascends;' and assuming that the Emperor is all that his enemies represent him to be, his successor promises a happier day. The Imperial crown will be shared, moreover, by an English Princess, of whom a writer not prone to flatter Royalty thus speaks:—

'Whoever he may be' (the future successor of Prince Bismarck), 'there is reason to believe that he 'will find large and penetrating sympathy and useful 'assistance in the illustrious Princess whom England has 'given to Germany. It is no secret that the present 'Crown Princess of Prussia and of Germany adds to the 'graceful acquirements and generous impulses and refined 'tastes of an accomplished woman no small interest or 'acquaintance with philosophical, social, and political 'questions. She is credited with ideas in harmony with 'her time, and the courage of these ideas. She has, it is 'hoped, a considerable part to play in the future of 'liberalised Germany as the counsellor of her husband, 'from whose good sense and courage much is hoped.'*

But this is to anticipate other chapters. The immediate subject of the present is the opinion, or rather, perhaps, opinions, which prevailed in England during and since the late war.

When the great war of 1870 broke out in the month of July the English Government, and people without distinction of party, concurred, certainly from no partiality for Prussia, in blaming France as the aggressor. Before three months had elapsed (and with no further light on the question than the revelation of the Benedetti plot supplied) the opinions of a large section of the British public had veered completely round; France was absolved and Prussia condemned.

The first judgment was founded upon the known facts, the second upon national sentiment, at all times a dangerous guide in public affairs, and never more so than on this occasion. As a natural result of inconsistency, Englishmen lost the confidence of both belligerents, offended each in turn, and made the rôle of mediator impossible. That rôle, at all times becoming to England, seemed to be especially pointed out to her by peculiar

* *Daily News*, August 17th, 1871.

relations to both parties in the contest. With France she had the influence of an ally who had given what the events proved to be the wisest (and, had it been followed, the most valuable) advice ever given by one country to another. With Prussia she had the claim of having rightly judged the original quarrel, and having found an easy and honourable way for France to retreat from a false position. Moreover, while with France England could appeal to past services in proof of friendship, Prussia had some guarantee of England's good will in the connection of the Royal Houses, and to neither country could English mediation appear officious or dictatorial.

Our position was free from all difficulty, for we had nothing to recant, nothing to rectify. We had entered upon a right course, which happened, also, to be the safest, and easiest—that of strict neutrality; yet by our inconsistency we incurred the ill-will, and, to some extent, the contempt of both belligerents. We forfeited all right to be regarded as impartial judges, and, so far as the anti-Prussian invectives could be called national opinions, placed ourselves in this dilemma:—If our first opinion was correct, Prussia had a right to complain of our fickleness. If our second opinion was correct, then we had unjustly condemned an ally, and, when we saw our error, in French phrase we 'wanted the courage of 'our opinions,' and only railed at the wrong-doer without helping his victim.

Nor can it be contended, unfortunately, that the inconsistency of judgment was confined to a small or unimportant section. Speakers and writers of weight led the anti-Prussian outcry; a portion of the daily press, and the two powerful *Reviews* of opposite politics, joined in it; and, unhappily, the most responsible Minister of the Crown added the influence of his great reputation to what we must consider a delusion. At least, Mr.

Gladstone allowed it to be generally believed that he, occupying the highest post in the councils of the Crown, thought it consistent with his duty to publish an aspersion upon the personal piety of the aged King of Prussia in the *Edinburgh Review*. Perhaps a greater insight into human nature than is attributed to Mr. Gladstone might have led him to see that whatever sins be chargeable to the gallant and outspoken old warrior, hypocrisy was not likely to be among them. Harsh he may be, and too fond of the 'pastime of kings,' ambitious, possibly even cruel,* but the stern soldier who, 'though he feared not 'man nor devil, yet reverenced his God,' was hardly likely in the moment of victory to play the Tartuffe. Could not a statesman, supposed to be 'emotional' himself, and not without parental affection, conceive it just possible that a soldier-king and a father, looking at his heroic son after unparalleled victories and proportionate dangers, might honestly, not hypocritically, thank heaven for such successes?

Another writer,† of less responsibility than Mr. Gladstone, repeats this charge of hypocrisy, which becomes a standing witticism not very creditable to Englishmen. It was well calculated to wound the best feelings of those Germans who owe it to their brave Emperor that France has not again desolated their hearths and homes.

A clever pamphlet, intended to warn England, by means of a fictitious narrative, was strangely supposed to prophesy a German invasion, because the author, having to assign some nationality to the imaginary invader, made them Germans, as at any other time he might have made them French. Of course, the writer of the *Battle of Dorking* never meant seriously that the German fleets, which had no existence at the time, would leave the distant shores of the Baltic or the Elbe, penetrate the

* Such is by no means the writer's opinion.

† The author of *Dame Europa's School*.

Straits of Dover, and effect a landing on the Sussex coast! The largest allowance—and it could hardly be too large for the inefficiency of our Admiralty system—could scarcely make such a thing possible, though a French invasion would often have been practicable enough since 1830; but English prejudice against Prussia took, in some minds, the undignified form of panic, and the same men who had felt a very ill-founded confidence in our naval strength deemed it utterly useless against an imaginary danger. The *Battle of Dorking*, after frightening the old women of England, was translated into French, and advertised in Paris shop-windows with a sensational illustration of the Prussian eagle tearing the British leopard to pieces. It may be absurd to argue against such mad delusions, or one single circumstance ought to completely reassure the Prussophobists in England. If the wearers of the pickelhaube are to invade us otherwise than in balloons, they will want transports and an ironclad fleet to protect them. Now it was in Bismarck's power, a few months since, to have supplied his country with an ironclad fleet very little inferior to our own, and, added to the few ships Germany possesses, superior to it. He had only to say to prostrate France, unable to resist any demand of the enemy that held her capital, her fortresses, and her whole army, 'Surrender your 'whole fleet' (or any part of it). Did he do so? Did he require a single ship (as he fairly might have done) from the conquered enemy who lately blockaded every German port, and swept all German commerce from the seas? Perhaps he had read the *Battle of Dorking* with more discernment than certain English readers, and was fully aware that Cherbourg is about the furthest point from which an invading army could attack England. It is to be hoped that the section of Englishmen who succumbed to the German panic was but small—it should have been confined to one sex. But it is unfortunately true of some

natures that they 'can never forgive those whom they 'have injured or vilified;' hence the persistency with which some writers still attack Prussia, while resolutely ignoring the haste of France. No stronger instance of this could be imagined than the mild judgment of such writers on the French Government for the Benedetti treachery, and the severity with which Bismarck is condemned for his far more venial share in that transaction. Admitting even that Bismarck had been the tempter, his guilt would have been the *suggestion* of a shameless robbery, and that of France the (contemplated) *perpetration* of the robbery, with the additional guilt of secretly betraying her English ally. In another case a public writer * of judgment, and usually of calmness and moderation, went so far as to recommend that an English army should be sent to aid France in a war which we had declared to be unjust and inexcusable on her part. Could we suppose a British Minister so reckless as to take such a step, he would have deserved to lose his head. No doubt this zeal for a late ally arose from causes creditable to English nature, and wholly free from envy or self-interest. There was pity for the miserable fate of France. There was the British leaning to the side of the weak, and hatred for whatever looks like abuse of strength. There were misconceptions as to the powerful argument which experience furnished to Germany for weakening France as the only safeguard against renewed aggressions: these causes, and that pugnacity which disposes Englishmen to share in a fray rather than look on, were, doubtless, at the root of what cannot but be regarded as a deplorable aberration of the public mind in England; for surely it is nothing short of a delusion which induces some Englishmen to express their anger at the terms imposed upon France, as if thereby the reign of justice

* *The Pall Mall Gazette.*

and mercy and all the peaceful virtues had been ended, Astræa driven from the earth, and the era of war, violence, and rapine installed. There would be, at least, as much of truth and probability in the opposite opinion. The name of Bonaparte has never been synonymous with peace, or regard for human life and happiness; and, though 'L'Empire c'est la paix,' no Christian monarch, except Napoleon I., has in this century caused more purposeless bloodshed than Napoleon III. Again, although as a matter of speculation a dominant Germany may prove a curse or a danger to Europe, we know as a matter of fact that French domination has proved both.

While the opinions expressed by several public men and writers in England gave just offence to Germany engaged in a death-struggle with her assailants, they were not less injurious to France herself than offensive to her enemy. An untimely sympathy, taking the form of a justification of France, naturally influenced M. Jules Favre in his unreasonable tone, and prolonged a hopeless contest.* Happily for England, for France, and for Europe, the official language of Government was throughout wise, firm, courteous, and consistent. Nor did any Minister (except the Premier) commit himself by indiscreet speeches or writings. Some Ministers being Members of Parliament, such as Sir J. Coleridge, Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Baxter, when addressing their constituents, did not hesitate to speak of the French aggressions in terms of condemnation and in language worthy

* Thus we find M. Favre quoting a despatch of M. Chaudordy on the favourable change of public opinion in England and saying that,—'M. Tachard, our Minister at Brussels, telegraphs that Mr. Davey, 'correspondent of the *Standard*, affirms that Lord Granville declared to 'him the day before yesterday, that the dismantling of Metz and Strasburg was the only thing England would allow.' There must have been some mistake as to Lord Granville, whose language throughout the negociations was consistent and dignified.

of British statesmen. They were taken to task for doing so by the anti-German press as awkward blunderers, who had committed an indiscretion, as if nothing had been due to truth, or to the side unjustly assailed as well as to the assailants. Nevertheless, among all that has been written or spoken upon the Franco-German war, few words better deserve attention than those addressed by Sir John Coleridge to his constituents at Exeter, in March, 1871. There has been even among those who heartily agree with the speaker's views such a dread of outspoken truth, that it is well to give an extract from a speech creditable to a British lawyer, and embracing the whole question at issue:—

'Most wars are wicked, and many wars have been 'unprovoked. But as far as I know history, and amongst 'all wars with which I have any acquaintance, the attack 'by France upon Germany in the autumn of last year 'was about the most utterly unprovoked, and the most 'abominable. I do not pretend to distribute, because I 'have no means or knowledge of distributing with 'accuracy, the true proportions of blame which various 'persons in France ought to bear of the guilt of that 'gigantic crime, whether it was the French Emperor, or 'whether it was—as there seems some reason to suppose, 'though she is a woman and a mother—the French 'Empress, who chiefly urged on the war which plunged 'two great nations into mourning. I suppose there was 'scarcely a Frenchman from one end of that great country 'to the other who was not prepared to go to war for the 'boundary of the Rhine—a boundary, give me leave to 'say, to which they have just as good and just as bad a 'title as we ourselves. But, at all events, in the beginning 'of the war we have nothing to repent or to be ashamed 'of. We did our best to prevent it, and in all reason, 'right, and sense, we ought to have prevented it. We 'obtained from Prussia the withdrawal of the candidature

'for the throne of Spain of the Prince of Hohenzollern, a 'concession which the French Government of that day 'stated would satisfy them, and which in good sense, 'right, and reason, ought to have satisfied them. But 'France would have her war. The few Frenchmen who 'opposed the war, opposed it, remember, not because the 'war was unprovoked and wicked, but because in their 'judgment France at that moment was not prepared to 'wage it. France would have her war, and the French 'people have suffered for it in a most awful measure. 'Every man of feeling—every man with a heart in his 'breast—must sympathize with the calamities of the great 'French people, with the miseries of Frenchmen, with the 'desolation brought on French homes, with the utter 'destruction and wreck of French prosperity. With all 'their faults they are a brave, a gallant, and a generous 'nation. We have fought against them, we have fought 'side by side with them, and I can feel, and every man 'can feel, for their sorrows and distress. But it would 'not be true, it would not be honest, if I were to say that 'I regret the result. The great majority of the people of 'this country sympathized with the Germans when the 'war broke out, because they thought the Germans had 'been assailed without the smallest provocation, and my 'sympathies have not changed as the sympathies of some 'men have, because in the progress of the struggle 'Germany, which was wronged, has won. From the time 'of Louis XIV., and possibly from even before his time, 'the French have been the great disturbers of the peace 'of Europe. Every poor man in this country is poorer, 'and every rich man in this country is less rich, because 'of the sleepless and persistent pursuit, on the part of the 'rulers of France, of that which they were pleased to call 'glory, but which in plain English is wicked, unprin- 'cipled, and unscrupulous aggression. Louis XIV., the 'First Bonaparte and the last Emperor, went to war

'again and again on pretexts so utterly frivolous that 'they created in other nations that had the smallest 'relations with them a feeling of utter insecurity. In 'this, it is true, they did but represent the steadfast 'feeling, the diseased craving of the great nation over 'which they ruled. The audacious assertion which we 'have so often, and so openly, and so boastfully heard 'repeated, that, forsooth, when France was contented 'Europe might be at peace, and that when France was 'discontented the peace of Europe was in danger, was 'so true, and unfortunately France was so often dis-'contented, and on such slight and frivolous grounds, 'that anything like a permanent peace was utterly impos-'sible. I cannot pretend to regret, therefore, that this 'miserable idol of French glory has been rudely shattered. 'I cannot affect to be sorry that the wicked and corrupting 'power of Louis Napoleon has been dashed to pieces. I 'rejoice in it, and I believe it to be the best thing for 'France herself, to be in the true interest of French 'greatness, of French prosperity, of French happiness, 'that France should learn by bitter experience what 'miserable and wide-waste calamity she has been in the 'habit of bringing down on other nations—with what one 'of her statesmen called a light heart, but what is, in 'truth, utter recklessness—for trivial reasons or for 'nothing. But, gentlemen, I admit that it may be said 'that the only result of the war just concluded is, that the 'object of your anxieties has been changed, but that your 'anxieties themselves remain unchanged, and that the 'German Empire in time to come is likely to be as 'fearful a trouble and scourge to the nations of Europe as 'the French have been. I do not think so. I feel 'nothing of the sort. I have faith in German history and 'German character, and I believe that in a short time the 'world will experience the unspeakable relief of having at 'the head of the Continent of Europe a nation great,

'brave, resolute, but pacific, instead of a nation great, 'brave, resolute if you will, but warlike, restless, and 'aggressive. However, gentlemen, I admit that this is a 'matter of opinion, and I find no fault with persons 'looking into the womb of the future coming to a 'different conclusion to myself.'

It is worth notice, as showing the unsettled state of public opinion in England at this time, that the colleague of Sir John Coleridge, a brother Liberal, speaking on the same occasion, expressed himself differently. After admitting the unjustifiable nature of the French aggression, he said that, 'Since the capitu-'lation of Sedan, and since the taking of Metz, my 'feelings on the subject have undergone a considerable 'change.' In fact, like many Englishmen, he thought that France should have been less severely punished. That is a point which will be discussed hereafter, but we must not forget that an insular Power having neither experience nor dread of invasion does not see the question from the same point of view as Germany—the hereditary victim of French ambition.

In justice to such English writers as not only judged the commencement of the war aright, but steadily maintained their opinions throughout the contest, Earl Russell may be quoted here. Many perhaps would have wished that in sketching English policy at so interesting a period he had devoted less space to bygone times and more to the present crisis. Still more, that the result of so much experience in statesmanship had been published earlier in the war, when it might have counteracted the mischievous views of those English writers who pandered to French 'Chauvinism.' Such writers led Frenchmen to think they had been right after all, that the tide of public opinion was turning in their favour, and that 'all can yet be restored,' as the Emperor had said.

After showing the utter hollowness of the French pretexts for going to war, and observing that 'the 'extreme futility of the pretence for a declaration of war 'put forth by the French Government seems almost to 'have escaped from memory,' Earl Russell goes on to say: 'Before the siege of Paris commenced, when the 'prospects of France were most cloudy, when the cata- 'strophe of Sedan had taken place, when Strasburg and 'Metz were bending to capitulation, Count Bismarck and 'M. Jules Favre met at Ferrières. Count Bismarck pro- 'posed an armistice, and, without laying down terms of 'peace, intimated that Germany would expect the cession 'of Alsace and a part of Lorraine. M. Jules Favre 'thundered on the other side, "Not an inch of our '"territory—not a stone of our fortresses."

'It appeared to me that Count Bismarck's sugges- 'tions were moderate and reasonable. I did not conceal 'my opinion; my friends, some of the members of the 'Government, were well aware of it. One of our weekly 'newspapers alluded to my opinion as that of an old- 'fashioned politician. My judgment, however, was founded, 'not on the treaties of old times, or on the precedents of 'Napoleon's days of conquest, but on a calm comparison 'of the existing means of France, with her young undis- 'ciplined forces opposed to the admirable legions of artil- 'lery, infantry, and cavalry led by German princes and 'German generals. The daily lies poured into the ear of 'France, the boast that no German soldier would escape 'alive from French valour, the restless energy of Citizen 'Gambetta, seemed to me all to portend such a treaty 'of peace as the Government of M. Thiers has signed.

'But a kind of political romance at this time seized 'upon the minds of the English people.

'The idea that appeared to pervade the popular 'organs of opinion and a Liberal Review was, that we 'were approaching a golden age, when, if war could not be

'altogether prevented, cessions of territory were never to 'be made or allowed. . . . In 1818 all the Powers agreed 'at Aix-la-Chapelle that the family of Napoleon should 'not be restored to the throne. It was implied that the 'boundaries of 1814–15 should not be passed. In 1851–52 'the first of these conditions was dispensed with by the 'consent of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia. 'On the other hand, Napoleon III. agreed to be bound by 'existing treaties, and during several years appeared to 'adhere to the spirit of this condition. The annexation 'of Savoy and Nice was the first open violation of it. 'Gradually the treaties of 1815 were more and more openly 'denounced, and were declared to be objects of detestation 'to the French sovereign. The path of peace, the pursuit 'of trade and national wealth, which had been wisely fol- 'lowed, the counsels of England, which had been accepted, 'were abandoned, and the project of making France 'secure by the conquest of the fortresses on the left bank 'of the Rhine was ostentatiously proclaimed. Thus the 'whole compact of 1815 was violently broken, and, had 'Germany been placed in any real danger, it would have 'been the duty of England and of Russia to have armed 'in her behalf. But Nemesis was not sleeping, neither 'was Prussia.'

It would have been well for France herself that every Englishman during the war had held the same clear and unambiguous language. Unfortunately, so far from maintaining that an unjust aggression deserved a signal punishment, there were Englishmen who, having themselves condemned the war as unprovoked, argued that England ought to step in to prevent its just consequences. Though our own Government gave no countenance to such ideas, they were not, it appears, without some effect upon the minds of Jules Favre and M. Thiers, who looked to England for more active sympathy than they were either destined or entitled to find.

In truth, that Englishman would have been the best friend to France who could have done most to make her see the wickedness and folly of the Napoleonism which has cost her so dear. When M. Thiers, in his Napoleonic legend, had formulated the aggression and robberies of the First Empire into a political code for France, he had made her future subjugation, whether by a coalition or a single power, a necessity,* or a great act of justice. The first duty of France is to unlearn the fatal lesson of that historian, and, instead of accepting his assertion that Frenchmen should regard the First Napoleon with grateful affection, learn to balance the account between France and the Bonaparte family. None can state a political question with more admirable clearness, nor argue it out more logically than Frenchmen. Let them, then, fairly state that account, or say whether, taking France as she is to-day, 'gratitude,' or execration, be due from her. Take the account in any way — 'military glory,' European esteem, or in what contributes more to the national dignity than either, the power of self-government, or in any other branch of political knowledge—has France gained or lost by Napoleonism? Shall we take the account in the false coin of military glory which Von Bismarck wisely said

* It is not implied that M. Thiers advocates the conquest of all Europe; he admits that Napoleon I. pushed his acquisitions further than was politic. But between the conqueror and the historian it is only a difference in degree. One would go beyond the Elbe, the other would stop at the Rhine, robbing three neighbours only instead of many more. Yet M. Thiers would allow to no country the power of resisting France; in other words, would claim that European hegemony of which M. Ernest Renan says, it is foolish to think, 'since it is well esta-'blished, that every attempt of a nation to achieve this hegemony, provokes 'by a necessary reaction the coalition of all the other States. Of this 'coalition England, the guardian of European equilibrium, will ever be 'the nucleus.' M. Renan adds a note that 'this applies to "Old '"England," who seems defunct in our days.'

'was not quoted in Berlin?'* Well, we have Marengo and Austerlitz, Auerstadt, Jena, and many other great names: fifteen years of military success (chequered, indeed, by defeats and the capitulation of three French armies), and then two invasions of France and the crushing defeat of Waterloo, followed by the occupation of Paris.

We have then the Second Empire, established like the First, by a 'whiff of grape-shot,' and the virtual suppression of all Frenchmen except the military. Then, on the credit side, we have the victories of the Crimea, the Italian campaign, with the acquisition of Nice and Savoy; the Mexican campaign (terminated by a stern 'notice to quit' from the United States). Then, *per contra*, the deep dishonour of the projected Belgian treachery, so ignominiously brought home to its author in spite of denials. The false pretext under which an unjust aggression, heralded by vainglorious boasting, to end in unparalleled humiliation, was ushered in. We have the utter collapse of 'The Army of the Rhine,' intended to seize its banks for France, but destined never to see the Rhine except as prisoners. Then from defeat to defeat, to the crowning ignominy of Sedan, the surrender of an Emperor, the capture of every field-marshal, every general, regiment, gun, standard, eagle, every fortified town (attacked), including the metropolis, the subjugation and submission of France, and the final humiliation of the German triumphal march through that 'Arc de Triomphe' whose records of past glories only enhanced the contrast and inspired the thought—'*sic transit.*'

It is for Frenchmen to decide whether, looking only at military glory and prestige, they are indebted to the Bonapartes, as much as that obscure Corsican family is

* M. Jules Favre, *Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale*, vol. i. p. 173.

certainly indebted to France. Fifteen years of victory abroad under the First Napoleon, eighteen years of national prosperity, and three successful wars under the Second, and then—what we know. Add to this some seven years of foreign occupation (under the two Empires), two war indemnities, the sacrifice of two provinces, and the utter dislocation of the State, leaving only revolution in abeyance.

But there are other standards of gain and loss besides military prestige. The respect and the confidence of other Powers is one, and a better still is that national fitness for self-government which alone gives stability in the present, and just grounds of self-reliance in the future. Did the Bonapartes benefit or injure France in these respects? We know to what state they have brought the army and the military capacity of its chiefs; have they trained a school of statesmen, administrators, diplomatists, in whose wisdom and justice not France alone, but Europe, place their trust? Or is M. Thiers (whose Napoleonic legend paved the way for all his country's disasters) the *only* pilot whom the poor distracted and disheartened crew can find? Are Messrs. de Gramont and Benedetti the best diplomatists that France, the classical land of diplomacy, can produce? And the people of France; have they been raised or lowered in the political, the social, and moral scale by Napoleonism? Politically, if we look at recent history and the present state of affairs, Frenchmen have yet to learn the alphabet of practical politics; indeed, Cæsarism and the suppression of all popular and individual initiative, cannot teach a nation the conduct of public affairs. The two Empires have in that respect been at best thirty-three years of suspended national life—no small loss to any country. This is only 'the day after the deluge' to France sitting amidst the wreck of all her institutions.

For her gain or loss, social and moral, we may consult

French writers of all parties since 1870, and in their frank confession of the national faults and degeneracy will be found the best, perhaps the only hope of recovery. English writers alone, and, of course, the Napoleonic party, who did all the mischief, are to be found throwing the blame of the rupture on Prussia, and justifying the old 'Chauvinism' of France.

Among the numerous French writers who seek to make the revival of Napoleonism impossible, such as Erckmann-Chatrian in their *Plébiscite;* E. Renan in his *Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale;* Count A. de Gasparin in *La France, nos Fautes, nos Périls, notre Avenir;* Amédée Leblanc in his *Nos Malheurs, leurs Causes, leur Remèdes;* Auguste Deschamps in his *Chute du Seconde Empire:* Gasparin writes in the healthiest tone. With him (an unflinching Huguenot) all falsehood is inexcusable, all palliations and apologies wrong and contemptible. He wages merciless war against the Chauvinism, the boastings and the fictions of French writers and speakers. With inexorably logical cogency he states every favourite plea and excuse of his countrymen, every argument by which they seek to show that France was right and Prussia wrong in the commencement and continuance of the war, and then, one by one, he demolishes every argument.

'Was not the Hohenzollern candidature an ambitious 'encroachment?' 'Then it was withdrawn on the 'demand of France.' 'Was not France insulted in her 'ambassador?' 'That ambassador himself has exploded 'the fiction.' 'But Prussia was seeking to annex neutral 'states.' 'France set the example by taking Nice and 'Savoy, and seeking to take Belgium.' 'Oh! that '"Belgian Project" was a device of Von Bismarck's.' 'How came it, then, that France admits having sought '*other* compensations—as Luxembourg, Landau, Sarre-'louis, &c.—and that the famous Belgian Project was in '*Benedetti's* handwriting? What should we have said had

'it been in *Bismarck's?*' 'At least, Prussia had enor-
'mously increased her military forces.' 'Compare the
'warlike expenses of the two countries for the last fifteen
'years. Which, during that time, had entirely renewed
'her armament? Which had created a navy at least
'equal, if not superior—it is our own assertion—to the
'English? Which power boasted of establishing what is
'unexampled—a double superiority by land and sea?'
'At least, France was not ready, while Prussia was.'
'France not ready! But she thought she was; she was
'assured that all was ready; M. Rouher told the Emperor
'publicly "he had waited patiently" for four years; Count
'Palikao affirmed that we had 1,200,000 Chassepots;
'Lebœuf said not a button was wanting; while Prussia
'had only the needle-gun, which she knew to be inferior,
'and intended to discard. The German plans of campaign
'were defensive, and Prussia knew that an aggressive war
'would forfeit the support of the Southern States and
'disgust the Landwehr.'

In such manner, though more at length, and therefore more convincingly, does Count Gasparin demolish the Imperial fictions about the causes of the war; nor is he less honest in admitting that, neither in the hostilities which ensued nor in the terms exacted, had France just cause of complaint. France was overrun by Germans as she intended that Germany should be overrun by Frenchmen. France went to war to despoil Germany of her Rhenish provinces, to seize her capital, to impose conditions of peace upon her; Germany repelled the intended invasion, resumed two (German) provinces, entered Paris, dictated terms of peace. 'With the measure you mete 'unto others shall it be meted to you again,' seems to M. de Gasparin as just as it is scriptural, and yet he is a Frenchman, and as such probably willing to sacrifice his life—though not his conscience—to his country.

It would have been honourable to England and

beneficial to France if all our writers had imitated M. de Gasparin in combating the vainglorious delusions to which France was a prey while there still remained a *locus penitentiæ* for her. Possibly it may have been as well for Europe that those delusions forced Germany into carrying on the war until the military prestige of France was utterly destroyed.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAUSES OF THE WAR OF 1870.

THE question was said to have been addressed to a German celebrity * by a Frenchman: 'Against whom are you waging 'war now that the Emperor is your prisoner and his govern-'ment at an end?' 'Against Louis XIV.' is the reported answer. 'Against Napoleon I.' would have had equal force and point, for it was the pretensions arising out of the Napoleonic legend which made enduring peace impossible. When the First Napoleon had been defeated far in advance of the Rhine, and was offered peace, with that river for his frontier, and vast territories, to which he had no just claim, in addition, he madly refused that offer. His insatiable ambition would yield nothing and lost all. The 'Government 'of the National Defence,' in 1870, followed the example and reaped a similar reward. Hating Napoleon III., they were unconsciously Napoleonic: 'Not an inch of 'our territory, not a stone of our fortresses!' That other countries should yield their frontiers or fortresses to France, that France should seize upon her 'natural 'frontier,' as M. Thiers calls the Rhine, and Germany should acquiesce, would be just and natural, but France yield—Never! Prince Bismarck, however, did not see the matter in this light. When told by M. Favre that the honour of France would not allow of any such concession he justly observed that the honour of France was not different in kind or quality from that of other nations.

* Von Ranke, the historian of the Popes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

But if the 'Napoleonic legend' misled the Republican Government in their negociations for peace, much more did it influence the ill-fated representative of Napoleon I. and his policy. The other causes of the war have but an accidental and transitory importance, but the policy of the Napoleonic legend, as expounded by M. Thiers, has a permanent European interest. It was the primary cause of the Franco-German war, as it had been of the Franco-Austrian war in 1859, and as it must have been of many other wars, had it not been—one would hope finally—discredited and overthrown in 1870.

That this is the view of impartial French writers might easily be shown. It will suffice to quote the Count de Gasparin again:—*

'We cannot deny it, and history proves that among 'us is found, in an exceptional degree, the spirit of 'conquest and armed expeditions, the spirit of vainglory 'and combativeness.

'M. Thiers, in his books and speeches, faithfully 'renders this side of our character. None more than he 'has contributed to the outbreak of this war which 'he had to oppose one day. It is he who has fostered 'among us the worship of the Napoleonic legend, he 'who has exalted the military greatness of France. It 'is he who has always advocated a large army and navy; 'he who transformed Sadowa into a French defeat. It is 'he who, amidst the applause of the Chamber, designated 'German unity as an enemy to our nation, he who opposed 'Italian unity with all his power. It is he who has spread 'through the whole country that jealousy of Prussia, 'turned to such good account in July (1870). It is he 'who brought into fashion, in spite of M. Favre, those old 'theories of the balance of power and the necessity for 'France to maintain around herself weak and divided 'neighbours.

* *Nos Fautes, nos Périls, notre Avenir.* Second Edition, p. 100.

'All such policy bears fruit abroad as well as at 'home.

'War amuses us, but it does not amuse our neigh- 'bours. Children of the old Gauls, who knew no other 'pleasure than fighting, who burnt the Capitol and 'bestowed their name on *Galata*, may require constant 'action. Be it so; but other people have other require- 'ments.

'We have come to be the *enfant terrible;* people fear 'us as in some way a general danger. What will France 'do, what is she about, whom will she attack, what 'is she preparing for, what will she covet next? 'There is not a moment's peace for any one. Some- 'times it is war that threatens, and Europe arms at 'all points, asking each morning whether France is not 'going to give the signal; at other times it is a revolution, 'and Europe, in alarm, asks if anarchy is beginning among 'us to overrun her afterwards. When any of our Govern- 'ments has lasted fifteen years people know that its days 'are numbered, that the fire will break out in Paris, and 'the flames spread everywhere.'

This is going to the root of the matter and exposing a source of war wholly independent of accident. With the Napoleonic legend in the ascendant in France, her policy could leave to neighbouring nations only two alternatives — acquiescence in a domination which not only would brook no rival, but would allow no neighbouring Power to strengthen itself against invasion; or else war.

Had the choice of these alternatives been offered to England, it is unnecessary to say which of them the most spiritless of Englishmen would have chosen. But hereupon an *argumentum ad hominem* to this effect has been addressed to England by the apologists of French aggression: — 'England, depending for her 'security upon her maritime superiority, would never 'allow that superiority to be compromised; and what

'superiority by sea is to England, superiority on land is to 'France; she was therefore justified in attacking Prussia.'

The answer to such an argument is: first, that there is no analogy between the two cases, and, secondly, that, if there were, the argument does not go the length of justifying France at all.

There is no analogy; because England with an insignificant army would obviously be exposed to danger from France with a very large army, and very aggressive instinct and traditions; but no Frenchman ever believed his country in danger of invasion from a single power, and against a general coalition nothing could defend her. No country ever had less excuse for aggression, as being a form of defensive war, than France, for the simple reason that no Frenchman ever believed that any country would singly make war upon her, or doing so obtain any advantage.

But, secondly, were the analogy complete, did England ever make the increase of any foreign navy to any extent whatever a '*casus belli?*' France did actually, under the late Empire, aim at possessing as many *efficient* ships as England, and, for a short time, in 1856–57, she did actually possess as many, with far more *available* men-of-war's men.* In 1863, again, France, starting fair with England in building an ironclad navy, had outbuilt her. Did England make this a *casus belli*,†

* If the fact did not rest upon the official authority of the First Lord of the Admiralty, now Lord Halifax, one might fairly doubt this, but in his speech to the House of Commons, May 18, 1857, he gave the relative forces of *steam* line-of-battle ships as 42 English to 40 French, and admitted that the French could man their fleet much more promptly than we could.

† It would have been a very good *casus belli* against our own Admiralty, who, with every possible advantage on their side, could neither build ships nor man them as fast as the French; but the superiority of our navy under all possible conditions of mismanagement is our vanity-point, our Chauvinism.

or even remonstrate? All we did, in our own slow and clumsy way, was to go on building more ships, leaving France to do the same if she pleased.

The argument, therefore, from the case of England, fails utterly, and we may assume that France entertained no more fear of Prussia than she did of Italy, though from each Power she demanded 'territorial compensa-'tions' for the aggrandisement which had accrued to them. Italy, feeling herself weak, yielded Nice and Savoy; Prussia, more confident, refused to weaken a frontier which experience had shown was too weak to resist a French invasion. But though the policy of keeping his neighbours in a state of weakness and dependence had not been adhered to by Napoleon III. as strictly as M. Thiers desired, it had not been by any means lost sight of. The programme of Italian liberation from the Alps to the Adriatic had not been fulfilled; a French garrison was kept in Rome with a *tête de pont* at Civita Vecchia, through which any number of French troops could be introduced, and Italy was thus made a French dependency.

The refusal of Prussia to yield any territory undoubtedly rankled in the bosom of the Emperor Napoleon, and nearly led to a rupture upon the Luxembourg question, though the danger was averted for the time by friendly mediation. Still the desire to 'avenge Sadowa' remained, and the very phrase expresses the unhealthy action of the Napoleonic legend upon the French mind. If Austria had sought to avenge her own defeat it would have been very natural; but France had herself attacked and defeated Austria a few years before, and had perfectly acquiesced in the Prussian hostilities of 1866. It was not, then, friendship for Austria that made France resent her overthrow at Sadowa; it was not any dread of Prussia; France was too courageous for such fear. It was, in the first place, it must be owned, unworthy envy

of a nation that had surpassed the French victories of 1859, over the same enemy, and, secondly, some misgivings, not about the safety of France, but about her military pre-eminence in the eyes of other nations. Thus envy concurred with the lust of domination and avidity of military glory to impel France to war with a country that had in no way injured or insulted her.

There are Englishmen, however—few let us hope—that justify France for, as they put it, 'seeking to 'maintain by arms that military supremacy to which she 'was entitled.' Alas for poor humanity if such an argument had many defenders! Knight-errantry among individuals is a thing of the past; is it to be revived among nations? Had England and America gone to war some years ago, and had one triumphed over the other, it would have become France on this theory to have challenged the victor!

But without carrying the theory to that absurd extent, there is a misconception in some minds as to the 'military primacy,' or 'military supremacy,' of France, as if it had been *de jure* as well as *de facto*! That is the essence of the Napoleonic legend and its pernicious lessons as taught by M. Thiers, and it has now been proved as unfounded in fact as mischievous in principle. M. Thiers holds, and teaches, that France, having, under the leadership of an unrivalled military genius, achieved a series of splendid victories, and occupied many foreign capitals, established her moral right to rule over Europe. The very opposite conclusion seems to result from the premises. France did indeed, under the wholly exceptional leadership of a man unequalled in military ability, subdue the greater part of Europe; but having done so, she established, not her moral fitness, but her unfitness, for European supremacy. She made herself the mere tool of an unprincipled usurper, who regarded Frenchmen as he regarded French

horses,—beings to be used in war, but not consulted about making it. And here a dilemma presents itself worthy of M. Thiers' consideration. The French nation was either the accomplice of Imperial ambition under the First Empire (and, indeed, we may add the Second), or the mere helpless instrument without any moral responsibility. If accomplice, then what becomes of the claim to be regarded as the moral leader and teacher of Europe? If, on the other hand, it be urged in exculpation of the French people that they disapproved such excesses of ambition as, for instance, the perfidious kidnapping of the Spanish Royal Family, and the theft of their throne, but were helpless to prevent it: is such a nation fit to rule Europe? M. Thiers would probably say that the 'glory of France' was the legitimate end which sanctified all means, but such reasoning can have no force for other nations, least of all for Englishmen.

The claims of France, then, to the hegemony of Europe was based upon the fact that she had actually, in the beginning of the century, achieved a military superiority which was good and valid so long as other countries admitted it. But when Germany, like the philosopher of old who confuted the argument against motion by moving, destroyed the belief in French superiority by conquering her, the claim was disposed of. Had Prussia been the assailant even, instead of the assailed, none who maintain that her growing strength gave France a just cause of war can deny that Prussia had a still juster cause in the growing strength of France.

Thus by indoctrinating France with the principles of his Napoleonic legend, M. Thiers had made war certain, since no continental nation endowed with self-respect or regard for their own interests would consent to hold life and property at the pleasure of France longer than they could avoid. The position of England was different, the facts of history having left no room for any French claim

to domineer over her; and it is probably this exceptional position which makes some Englishmen less able to see the German side of the question. Yet it is not difficult to see by the light of subsequent events that Germany must sooner or later have overthrown the French Napoleonic policy.

Given, two warlike nations of aggressive tendencies and antecedents, one resolved to keep its neighbours in a state of inferiority, and the other resolved upon entire equality, and it is easy to guess the result. From the date of the battle of Sadowa France had resolved either to aggrandise herself proportionally to the newly-acquired power of Prussia, or to reduce Prussia to her former state of weakness. In carrying this purpose into effect France had the misfortune to put herself as much in the wrong, both morally and politically, as it was possible to do; and this not only in the eyes of her enemies, but in the opinion of her best friends, and indeed of nearly all Frenchmen, when able to look back with some degree of calmness upon the blunders of the Second Empire.

It has been said in the last chapter that public opinion in England, after blaming France for declaring war without just reason, underwent a change and became adverse to Germany, then pursuing a career of unchequered victory. There were not wanting some plausible grounds for this change, and there were some enlightened Englishmen who saw in the irresistible progress of the German arms a source of danger to Europe. The memory of that 'Seven Weeks' War,' in which Prussia overwhelmed the armies of Austria and her allies, and the easily won but unworthy victories over Denmark, strengthened the impression that Prussia had entered upon a course of ambitious aggrandisement. People said, 'Six years 'ago Prussia was barely a Power of the first order. With

'a population of only eighteen and a half millions, about 'half that of France, not two-thirds of that of England, 'very nearly the same as that of Spain, nothing but her 'former successes in war and her present military organiza- 'tion entitles Prussia to rank with the Great Powers. But 'now we see her oppressing feeble Denmark, a country of 'only a million and a half of inhabitants, then striking 'down Austria, a few years later crushing France, two 'first-rate powers. Where is this to end?' 'Look, too,' it was added, 'at the greed of territory which has 'marked the whole career of Prussia. Even after all the 'acquisitions of Frederick the Great Prussia only compre- 'hended 75,000 square miles, and under the Treaties of '1815 but 107,000. The war of 1866 added 30,000 square 'miles and nearly six million inhabitants to Prussia, and 'now she claims in the name of the German Empire a 'further increase of territory and population from van- 'quished France.' From a consideration of all these facts, added to French reports of cruelties to the civil population of invaded provinces, and a general belief in the unscrupulousness of Von Bismarck, Englishmen came first to pity the vanquished, then to palliate their aggression as in some sort a necessity, and at last to condemn Germany for requiring a cession of territory.

Now, the facts cited above are undeniable, though admitting of more than one view; but the question is whether they justified France in declaring war, as some English writers of authority have contended? The history of Prussia is one of constant aggrandisement by war, but is not that the history more or less of every other great country? Was France always what we have seen her, or was her king always 'Le Grand Monarque?' Was Russia always as she is now, or was peaceful Austria, though she owes proverbially more to Hymen than to Mars? Was the ruler of England always sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland, with very large slices of Asia,

Africa, and America? It seems the destiny, right or wrong, of certain nations, like certain men, to grow large and strong. One man lives and dies where he was born, doing just as his forefathers did. Another feels that he can improve his condition; he surmounts difficulties and makes his own way in the world. It is the same with nations, whether the impulse be given by energetic rulers or spring up among the masses.

But some English authorities have argued that the growth of Prussia was a danger to France, and therefore a justification of war. Were the fact of such danger admitted—which it certainly would not have been by Frenchmen—this argument would not carry us very far. The growth of France as a naval power, evidently aiming at equality with England by sea, while the French land force was threefold greater, was a danger to England, but we never made it a *casus belli*. So also the immense growth of the United States of America threatens our naval superiority and our Transatlantic possessions, but it would not justify us in declaring war. But, farther, if the strength of Prussia with her smaller population was a danger to France, *à fortiori*, the strength of France was a danger to Prussia; so that on the principle of allowing no rival, there must be perpetual war, or general submission to one dominant power. In truth, however, the French did not fear Prussia at all. So far from it, the cry of Frenchmen was for war to carry them to Berlin, and to acquire the left bank of the Rhine. The French, though given to boasting, are not cowards, and their habitual boast was that nothing less than an European coalition could conquer them. This vaunt, which Germany has disposed of, negatives any idea of France dreading an invasion from Germany. What France dreaded more was such a strengthening of Germany as should make it difficult to despoil her, and impossible to play the old game of enlisting Germans against Germans

for the profit of France. It has actually been put forward as a grievance that if France, surrounded on two sides by the sea and neutral Belgium, and on another by the Pyrenees, was to be 'opposed by the mass of Germany 'on the other side, she would be smothered (*étouffée,*)—in other words, constrained to abandon the practice of invading her neighbours! Hence the anger felt when Prussia consolidated her power in 1866. It was the capital error of the policy of Napoleon III. in the eyes of Frenchmen that he did not declare war against Prussia after Sadowa,* and no French statesman carried that opinion farther than M. Thiers. Two reasons, however, may have influenced the Emperor's mind pacifically on that occasion:—the French arsenals had been nearly emptied by the Mexican War; and, secondly, Napoleon III. hoped to obtain by negociation from Prussia, or at the expense of a neutral, advantages as great as could be gained by war. At first the demand was made for part at least of the coveted 'left bank of 'the Rhine' and a few fortresses, useful as private entrances into the German territory, then for Luxembourg; and while the new position of Prussia seemed insecure, Bismarck protracted the negociations to gain time. After the battle of Sadowa, Prussia felt at ease, and flatly refused to cede any German territory to France; and then Belgium (at whose suggestion it matters not) became in the eyes of Napoleon III. the equivalent to be appropriated by France, because Prussia had (perhaps unscrupulously) helped herself to German territory. The idea was as much in accordance with

* The expression of a French statesman relative to the battle of Sadowa was that France had been 'deeply wounded' by it! In the case of the populace at least the wound was inflicted on the vanity and jealousy which thought the laurels of Magenta and Solferino were dimmed by a more decisive victory over the late antagonists of France.

Napoleonic traditions as it was opposed to honour and honesty, but of that hereafter.

So far, then, the question between France and Prussia offered no *casus belli* in the usual acceptation of the term. France had lost nothing, though Prussia had gained much; and the affair of Belgium was too discreditable to be put forward, whatever turn the negociations may have taken at this period. The Benedetti revelations, however, make it clear that at different times during 1866-67 French diplomacy aimed at some 'compensation' for the gains of Prussia, and in 1868 obtained a certain concession in the dismantling of the fortifications of Luxembourg, and the neutralization of that territory. The French official documents captured by the Prussian Army, and opportunely used by Von Bismarck to confound the luckless Benedetti, prove that the seizure of Belgium without a shadow of right or justice was a point decided on in the French councils during 1866 or 1867, and referred to as a matter fully understood, but why it was not carried into effect remains unexplained. Possibly France, failing to obtain the desired guarantee of Prussian aid against English or Russian interference in behalf of Belgium, thought it imprudent to commit an act that would have been nothing less than a high-handed robbery without even a pretext. But a preposterous claim to the management of a Belgian railway was put forward by the French Government at this time, as if to serve the purpose of the wolf's complaint against the lamb, should it be desirable. Perhaps Prussia, when she felt herself strong enough to take high ground, may have objected to a conquest that would have brought France into dangerous proximity to the Lower Rhine. In the latter case, it was not an avowable grievance that Prussia should object to an act of unprincipled spoliation; and in the sequel, the French Government ceased to urge any claim to

territory or fortresses as necessary to her safety or dignity. She had still a population equal to the aggregate of the German States arrayed against her in 1870, and far greater than any German coalition she believed likely to oppose her. It is almost unnecessary to add that France considered the military value of her population as incomparably greater than that of any other people.

Under these circumstances not only did the Imperial Government acquiesce in the 'accomplished fact' that had caused so much jealousy at the time, but the Ministers endeavoured to satisfy the Chambers that Germany was in truth weakened, and not strengthened, by the events of 1866.* Before the Treaty of Prague it was said Germany was one, having a population of nearly 80,000,000; there are now two States (if not three), each having about half that number, and divided by the memories of a recent war. This, which was certainly an optimist view, was naturally contested by the Opposition, and especially by M. Thiers, who has since published his speech in the form of a pamphlet, with all the 'profonde 'sensation,' 'mouvement,' 'exclamations nombreuses,' given by French reporters.

That speech, marked by all the talent of the speaker and all his political onesidedness, is a formal indictment against Prussia for her ambition—a virtue in France, it seems, but an unpardonable sin in any other country. Prussia is first censured (and very deservedly so) for her conduct to Denmark, and then for her alliance with Italy against Austria, and her supposed design of re-establishing the Empire of Charles V. with Berlin instead of Vienna for capital, and Italy instead of Spain for her support. M. Thiers would have resisted these encroachments, first, in the interest of the German

* The official argument used in the French Chambers was, that so far from being strengthened by Sadowa, Germany had been weakened. Divided into three fragments, '*trois tronçons*,' were the words used.

States themselves; secondly, in the interest of France; thirdly, in the interest of European equilibrium. He would not, however, have declared war against Prussia in the first instance, but would have addressed a moral lecture to Von Bismarck on the sin of ambition. It never struck M. Thiers that such a lecture, coming from France, under a Napoleon, and at the suggestion of the historian of *The Consulate and Empire*, might appear to Von Bismarck somewhat amusing. But with Italy M. Thiers would have been more peremptory, with the secondary object of restraining Prussia, by making an example of her ally. He imagines that this course, if followed by France in 1866, would have prevented the Austro-Prussian war, and its disastrous consequences.

But what must strike any Englishman in reading M. Thiers' speech, is the singular blindness of that distinguished Frenchman to the fact that the conduct he blames in Prussia is exactly the conduct that he would justify, nay admire, in a French ruler. Were it undeniable that Prussia desired to subvert the 'European equili-' brium,' does M. Thiers, the enthusiastic defender of French supremacy under the First Empire, and at all times, mean that French supremacy and European equilibrium are one and the same thing? Or how, again, could France, who for no particular reason, and with Italy for an ally, made war upon Austria in 1859, protest against Prussia doing the same in 1866? M. Thiers says that he would neither have allowed Italy to become a single kingdom in 1859, nor to have joined Prussia in order to acquire Venice in 1866; and it never strikes him that such dictation to an independent nation is as arrogant and dictatorial as any conduct imputed to Prussia. Though but natural in a statesman who takes the First Napoleon as his ideal ruler, it is hardly sincere to justify such policy as required by the balance of power and the good of Germany. The French Chamber, however,

applauded a view which is shared by most Frenchmen, and which is, indeed, the essence of the mischievous theory that France has rights different from and superior to those of other countries. But the desire of France to keep her neighbours weak and divided, came into conflict with something more than the desire, the firm resolution of Germany to be no longer weak nor divided, but, whether under Prussia or otherwise, to put an end to that system which has always enabled France to shed German blood by German hands. A choice of two alternatives offered weakness abroad or union at home, and she made the choice which England would have made; yet Englishmen blame her! But let them only make the case their own, and then judge how England would have acted under the same circumstances with the memory of as many unprovoked French invasions as Germany has known.

To transfer the circumstances of Germany (before 1866) to England, we have only to imagine the union with Scotland and Ireland repealed, and the Saxon Heptarchy restored with such a paper constitution as Sir A. Malet admires and France would have found well suited to her purpose. Would not all Englishmen consider that, if a subdivided England had constantly proved too weak to resist French invasion, the reorganization of the kingdom was a purely English question? And if a masterful king of Wessex (we may suppose) proved himself by his deeds to be the fittest head of the Heptarchy, should we not accept him as such, whatever France might think? And if that king should even annex Scotland and Ireland should we heed any French remonstrances against it? Should we not say that the very fact of France, who feared no invasion herself, being troubled at our internal arrangements, proved their expediency? If, again, France required us to 'indemnify' her by some cessions of our own territory, because we had consolidated our power,

should we listen to her? Or if thereupon she asked our aid to seize the territory of some friendly power or ally (say Belgium), as compensation for our gains, should we not answer—it is to be hoped, at least—that England would have no share in the shameless robbery? If, lastly, to complete the parallel, France, enraged at our refusal, attacked us, and we defeated her, occupied Paris, and required the cession of her Channel ports, what should we say to Prussia pleading the cause of the aggressor, and telling us we were going too far, and were too exacting?

Should Prussia tell us, with Mr. Gladstone, that, at all events, we should consult the wishes of the inhabitants of the French towns by means of a Plébiscite, whether they would like to be annexed, it is not necessary to ask our reply. We should say that Plébiscites formed no part of our traditions, though we had annexed States and Colonies enough in our time—the Kingdom of Oude only fourteen years ago. Perhaps we should add that we knew well enough, without any Plébiscite, that Frenchmen did not like being annexed any more than Englishmen liked being invaded, but that, between two disagreeable inflictions, we chose that which would fall on our enemies. If Prussia officiously persisted, especially while the struggle lasted and every English family was in mourning, it is even possible that we might be more peremptory than polite in rejecting her humane interference.

It is only by keeping in mind the events of 1866, and the secret negociations now brought to light, which followed the battle of Sadowa, that we can understand the rupture of 1870. On the moral or the diplomatic aberrations of France on that occasion little need be said. When there is no defence, the proof of guilt is easy, and each party in France, Imperialist or anti-Imperialist, only aims at throwing the blame upon its opponents. The

facts, at all events, are simple, and *now* undisputed; but it is well to repeat them as authentically recorded in the papers presented to Parliament, which, at all events, place the judgment, the consistency, and the industry of our diplomacy in a good light.

In a perfectly cloudless political sky, in July, 1870, Europe suddenly learned that France had found a *casus belli* with two neighbouring powers, Prussia and Spain. The latter, after vainly seeking a king for the last two years, had offered her throne to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, very remotely related to the Royal Family of Prussia, and the Prince had accepted it. Very few hours intervened between Lord Granville's satisfactory assurance, on July 5th, that the experienced permanent head of the Foreign Office 'had never known so great a 'lull in foreign affairs,' and the arrival of a telegram from our Minister at Paris informing Lord Granville that the French Government would not *permit* Spain to elect the Prince of Hohenzollern.* At or about the same time the Prussian Government received a 'demand for ex-'planation' as to its share in the choice of the Prince, with an intimation that France would require the King of Prussia to oblige the Prince to refuse the proffered crown. The terms of this demand do not appear in the published papers, but Earl Granville tells Lord Lyons on June 8th that Count Bernstorff had given the substance of the reply, which 'was to the effect that it was 'not an affair which concerned the Prussian Government.' The Count also 'dwelt much on the violent language of 'France.'

The views of her Majesty's Government upon this demand made by France, and the language used respect-

* When England called William of Orange to her throne she practically acquired the Dutch army and navy. Yet so far from permitting Louis XIV. to disallow that choice, she compelled him to acknowledge William III. But Spain is weak, France strong.

ing it, are given by Earl Granville.* 'Her Majesty's 'Government are not able to perceive that the nomination 'of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern to the throne of 'Spain is a matter of such importance to a great and 'powerful nation like France as to warrant carrying to 'extremes a national feeling of resentment. But it 'appears clear that such a feeling does exist, and it is 'probably in deference to such opinion that words have 'been publicly used by Ministers of the Emperor which, 'at the outset, undoubtedly add greatly to the difficulty of 'an amicable settlement of this question.'

The French Government not only used such language, but at this early date (July 9th) began to prepare for a war they had evidently resolved upon.† So strong did this resolution appear to the British Government that Earl Granville expresses a doubt of the 'expediency of 'making any further attempt at the present moment' to avert the danger of war.‡ Her Majesty's Government, however, did persevere, and not without success, as far as Spain and Prussia were concerned, since both made such concessions as the latter, at least, is not likely to repeat. Spain actually submitted to the dictation of France, and at a late period the obnoxious candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern was terminated by the desire of the King of Prussia.

On July 10 Lord Lyons informs Earl Granville § that M. de Gramont 'told me that I might report to your 'lordship that if the Prince of Hohenzollern should now, 'on the advice of the King of Prussia, withdraw his accept-'ance of the Crown, the whole affair would be at an end.'

Acting upon this declaration, the British Government appear to have made the most energetic and unremitting

* Earl Granville to Lord Lyons, July 9th, 1870.—(No. 16).

† Earl Granville to Lord Lyons, July 9th, 1870.—(No. 17.)

‡ Ibid.

§ Lord Lyons to Earl Granville, July 10th, 1870.—(No. 25.)

exertions,* not only at the Courts of France, Spain, and Prussia, but elsewhere, to bring about a peaceful solution. Had not 'madness ruled the hour,' and the Imperial Government been doomed to destruction, France might have concluded the affair, not only satisfactorily, but triumphantly. On July 12th Lord Lyons writes to Earl Granville:—'M. de Gramont said that this state 'of things was very embarrassing to the French Govern-'ment. On the one hand public opinion was so much 'excited in France that it was doubtful whether the 'Ministry would not be overthrown if it went down to 'the Chamber to-morrow and announced that it regarded 'the affair as finished without having obtained more com-'plete satisfaction from Prussia. On the other hand, the 'renunciation of the Crown by Prince Leopold put an end 'to the original cause of dispute. The most satisfactory 'part of the affair, M. de Gramont said, was, that Spain 'was at all events quite clear of the dispute. The quarrel, 'if quarrel there was, was confined to France and 'Prussia.

'I did not conceal from M. de Gramont my suspicion 'and regret that the French Government should hesitate 'for a moment to accept the renunciation of the Prince as 'a settlement of the affair; I reminded him pointedly of 'the assurance he had authorised me to give to her 'Majesty's Government, that if the Prince withdrew his 'candidature the affair would be at an end. I urged as 'strongly as I could all the reasons which would render a 'withdrawal on his part from this assurance painful and 'disquieting to her Majesty's Government.

'I pointed out moreover, that the renunciation wholly 'changed the position of France. If war took place now 'all Europe would say that it was the fault of France, 'and that France rushed into it without any substantial 'cause, and merely from pride and resentment. One of

* One of Earl Granville's telegrams is dated '2.30 A.M.,' July 10th.

'the advantages of the former position of France was, 'that the quarrel rested on a cause in which the feelings 'of Germany were very little concerned, and German 'interest not at all. Now, Prussia might well expect to 'rally all Germany to resist an attack which could be 'attributed to no other motive than ill-will and jealousy on 'the part of France, and a passionate desire to humiliate 'her neighbour. In fact, I said France would have public 'opinion throughout the world against her, and her 'antagonist would have all the advantage of being mani-'festly forced into the war in self-defence to repel an 'attack.' Earl Granville writes next day * approving of these arguments.

Now, it must be remembered that the language used here is the cautious and studied language of an old diplomatist, that it does not proceed from a party in the dispute, nor from a cold neutral, but from the ambassador of the Power most friendly to France. Taking this into account, strong and clear as the condemnation of French policy is, much more is implied than is expressed. A friendly ambassador cannot tell the Government to which he is accredited that it has alleged a grievance which was not the real grievance, that it had stated the terms upon which it would be satisfied, and then, having obtained these terms, had shown that the statement was only made to serve a purpose. He cannot, in short, call falsehood falsehood and dishonourable conduct dishonourable, but the language of Lord Lyons means all this.

The infatuated Government of the Emperor, whether intoxicated by visions of victory or dreading a reaction from the war fever it had created, refused to rest satisfied when Spain bowed to French dictation and the Prince of Hohenzollern withdrew his candidature. The King of Prussia had 'approved' the withdrawal of the Prince of Hohenzollern, but, though Spain also had formally put

* Earl Granville to Lord Lyons, July 13th, 1870.—(No. 31.)

an end to his candidature, France now required that the King of Prussia should, as it were, go bail for the Prince that he never at any future time should accept a throne, which it was evident would never be offered to him.

This demand was communicated to the French Chamber by the Duc de Gramont, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a speech reported by the Official Journal on the 15th July. The Duke, having first repeated an assertion which Earl Granville had on a previous occasion positively contradicted,* so far as England was concerned, proceeded to detail the diplomatic action of France.

EXTRACT *from the* 'JOURNAL OFFICIEL' *of July* 16*th*, 1870.

'The PRESIDENT.—The Minister for Foreign Affairs 'has a statement to make on behalf of the Govern-'ment.

'His Excellency the DUC DE GRAMONT, Minister for 'Foreign Affairs.—The manner in which the country 'received our declaration of the 6th of July having afforded 'us the certainty that you approved our policy, and that 'we could reckon on your support, we at once began 'negociations with the foreign Powers in order to obtain 'their good offices with Prussia in order that she might 'admit the legitimacy of our grievances.

'In these negociations we have asked nothing of Spain, 'of whom we neither wished to awaken the susceptibilities 'nor wound the independence. We took no action with 'the Prince of Hohenzollern, whom we considered as 'being shielded by the King. We also refused to mix up 'any recrimination with our discussion or to permit that 'discussion to diverge from the object to which, from the 'commencement, we had confined it.

'Most of the Powers were full of eagerness to answer

* Lord Lyons to Earl Granville, July 16th, 1870.—(Enclosure in No. 75.)

'us, and they have admitted the justice of our demands 'with more or less warmth.

'The Prussian Foreign Office answered by a demurrer 'pretending that it knew nothing of the matter, and that 'the Cabinet of Berlin had remained a stranger to it.

'We were accordingly compelled to address our-'selves to the King himself, and we instructed our 'Ambassador to proceed to the King at Ems. While 'acknowledging that he had authorised the Prince of 'Hohenzollern to accept the candidature which had been 'offered him, the King of Prussia maintained that he 'had remained a stranger to the negociations conducted 'between the Spanish Government and the Prince of 'Hohenzollern—that he had only intervened as head of 'the family, and in no way as sovereign, and that he 'had neither called together nor consulted his Ministers 'in Council. His Majesty, however, acknowledged 'that he had informed Count Bismarck of the various 'incidents.

'We could not consider these answers satisfactory— 'we could not admit that subtle distinction between the 'sovereign and the head of the family, and we insisted 'on the King advising, and, if necessary, forcing Prince 'Leopold to renounce his candidature.

'While we were in discussion with Prussia, the relin-'quishment of his candidature by Prince Leopold came 'to us from the quarter from which we did not expect 'it, and was communicated to us on the 12th of July by 'the Spanish Ambassador.

'The King having wished to remain a stranger to 'the question, we asked him to associate himself with it, 'and to declare that if by one of those changes which 'are always possible in a country emerging from a revo-'lution, the Crown were to be again offered by Spain to 'Prince Leopold, he would no longer authorise him to 'accept it, so that the discussion might be considered

'as definitely closed (Approval). Our demand was 'moderate, the terms in which we expressed it were not 'less so. "Be sure and tell the King," we wrote to 'Count Benedetti on the 12th of July, at midnight— '"be sure and tell the King that we have no *arrière* '"*pensée*, that we do not seek a pretext for war, and that '"we only ask to be able to solve honourably a difficulty '"which is not of our creation." The King consented 'to approve Prince Leopold's renunciation, but he 'refused to declare that he would not again in the future 'authorise the renewal of this candidature. (Move- 'ments of surprise.)

'"I have demanded of the King," M. Benedetti writes 'to us at midnight on the 13th of July, "to be so good '"as to permit me to announce to you in his name that '"if the Prince of Hohenzollern should again think of '"his project his Majesty should interpose his authority '"and prevent it. The King has absolutely refused to '"authorise me to send you such a declaration." (Sensa- 'tion. Murmurs.) "I have vigorously persisted, but '"without succeeding, in modifying the determination of '"his Majesty. The King terminated our interview by '"saying that he could not, nor did he wish to, under- '"take such an engagement, and that he would in this '"eventuality, as in all others, reserve to himself the '"faculty of consulting the circumstance." (Exclamations. 'Loud dissentient cries. A voice: "Insolence cannot go '"farther." Hear, hear.)

'M. Duruy.—It is a defiance.

'The Minister for Foreign Affairs.—Although 'this refusal seemed to us unjustifiable (Marks of 'assent), such was our desire of preserving to Europe 'the blessings of peace that we did not break off the 'negociations; and in spite of your just impatience, 'fearing that a discussion should hamper them, we 'asked you to adjourn the explanations till to-day.

'(Universal marks of approbation.) We were, accordingly, profoundly surprised when we learnt yesterday that the King of Prussia had notified by an aide-de-camp to our Ambassador that he would not receive him any more (Lively movements of indignation), and that, in order to give to this refusal an unequivocal character, his Government had communicated it officially to the Cabinets of Europe. (Explosion of murmurs.)

'SOME SENATORS.—It is too much impertinence and audacity.

'THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.—We learnt at the same time that Baron Werther had received orders to go on leave, and that armaments were being effected in Prussia. Under these circumstances a further attempt at conciliation would be a forgetfulness of dignity and an imprudence. (Loud assent. Prolonged applause.) We have neglected nothing to avoid a war: we are about to prepare to sustain one which is offered to us (Yes, yes. Very good. It is true.), leaving to each the share of responsibility which belongs to them. Since yesterday we have called in our reserves, and, with your assistance, we are about immediately to take the measures necessary to secure the interest, the safety, and the honour of France. (Prolonged bravos and applause.)'

And, amidst such bravos and applause, the curtain fell on the first ignoble scene of that drama which was to end in the ignominy of Sedan, Metz, and Paris.

Looking back with all the additional light of subsequent history, we know how much of intentional misrepresentation the Ministerial statement contained, for the facts are no longer matter of controversy. The calamities which crushed the national dignity, and swept away all official conventionalities, have exposed the false pretensions of the Imperial Government, though we may

perhaps remain, in some degree, ignorant of the motives by which it was actuated.

But taking the account of the French Ministers, as given above, and interpreting it by known facts, it is clear that the King of Prussia must have placed great restraint upon himself under provocations rarely offered to sovereigns, and which could only have been intended to produce a rupture. Divested of official circumlocution, the Duc de Gramont's narrative may be rendered thus:—France took umbrage at the choice of a king which Spain had made because the Prince chosen for the Spanish throne was related, very distantly, to the King of Prussia, and France requested the friendly intervention of other Powers to obtain the revocation of that choice. The intervention asked was given, the revocation was made, the King of Prussia concurred in it, though saying that it concerned Spain alone, and was not his business. The French Ambassador begged that the King would *make* it his business, and followed up this piece of presumption by telling him that, although Spain had given up her choice, though the Prince had ceased to be a candidate, though the King of Prussia concurred in this arrangement, he must do more—he must, in fact, go bail for the Prince that, under no possible circumstances, should he ever accept the Spanish throne. The King of Prussia, who, if not singularly obtuse, must have seen that war was resolved on, refused to undertake such an absurd engagement, which refusal caused, we read, 'movements of surprise' in the French Chamber, and he did not dismiss M. Benedetti, which ought to have caused more. Finally the King (according to the French account) sent his aide-de-camp to dismiss the Imperial and imperious Ambassador.

Strange to say, this very natural climax of the quarrel, though probable in itself, and actually reported

by a German newspaper, proved to be incorrect. The high-spirited King, who was within a few weeks to prostrate the power of France, never lost his temper, but maintained the same dignified forbearance, and even courtesy, to the end!

When the Foreign Minister of France quoted the assurances given to the King of Prussia that France had no 'arrière pensée,' and did not seek a pretext for war, he forgot the wise maxim, 'qui s'excuse s'accuse,' for surely no State or person not intending to pick a quarrel volunteers such an assertion. We may assume, on sufficient grounds, that the French Government had resolved on war as desirable to efface the memory of the miserable Mexican Expedition, and its inglorious abandonment at the command of the United States, as well as the failure of French diplomacy either to prevent the aggrandisement of Prussia, or to obtain the desired equivalent. But there is still some difficulty in understanding why, when France had decided on war, and found a pretext for it, she should have taken steps which removed that pretext, involved her in inconsistency and bad faith, and placed her conduct in the worst light.

Thus when she had insisted that the acceptance of the Spanish throne by the Prince of Hohenzollern was proof of the complicity of the King of Prussia, and then on the renunciation of that throne by the Prince, refused to admit that the King of Prussia had concurred in the act, France laid herself open to the logical argument of Earl Granville. 'If it was argued,' said Earl Granville, 'that he would not have accepted without that authority '(the King's), the converse argument must hold good, 'that he could not retract his consent without the same 'authority.'

The explanation of the inconsistent course followed by France seems to be, that after the Emperor had

resolved on war, with some hopes of assistance from the South German States, he learned that all Germany was united against French aggression. Upon hearing this the Emperor hesitated until a fresh impulse was given to his mind by the military ardour evoked in Paris by the first rumours of war. Lord Lyons writes from Paris* on July 14th,—'The public excitement was so great, and 'so much irritation existed in the army, that it became 'doubtful whether the Government could resist the cry 'for war even if it were able to announce a diplomatic 'success.' The war fever (stimulated in the first instance by the Government) increased, and when the desired satisfaction was given, the Emperor, like many vacillating characters, ended by adopting the course which sealed his own and his country's ruin.

The history of this unjust, unwise, and unfortunate rupture cannot be better given than in the words of the article imputed to Mr. Gladstone. If the main conclusion arrived at there had been as unimpeachable as the principles, no more could have been desired:—

'But this point also, notwithstanding the ill-starred 'mode in which the demand had been preferred, was 'gained, and the King became a party to the cancelling 'of the whole arrangements. What was hereupon the 'conduct of the French Government? They had defined 'for themselves the cause and the limit of their com-'plaint. It was now fully removed. They acknowledged 'the removal and they declared the quarrel to be closed 'as regarded Spain. But, to the astonishment of the 'world, they imported a new term into the controversy, 'and thereby gave some warrant to a suspicion that they 'were determined not to part with their grievance, but to 'turn it to account. The Duc de Gramont announced 'that the communications with Prussia were not at an

* Lord Lyons to Earl Granville, July 14th, 1870.—(No. 60.)

'end, and he required of the King an engagement that 'under no circumstances would he consent to the revival 'of the Hohenzollern candidature. It was not possible 'that any one conversant with the laws of just self-'respect, to say nothing of those of punctilio, would 'suppose the King of Prussia could, or ought to comply 'with this demand. But, heaping blunder upon blunder, 'the Government of France overlooked the fact that in 'the view of the whole world Prussia could at most be 'regarded as the accessary to the offence, whereas Spain 'was the principal. Yet the principal was absolved upon 'the mere abandonment of the candidature while the 'accessary was required to declare that he would never 'offend again. Once more we say that this inequality in 'the eyes of the world could receive only one explanation '—that the situation, the military preparations of four 'years, the start supposed to have been gained over 'Prussia, were too good things to be parted with. It is 'hard to say that a motive so indescribably wicked was 'consciously and deliberately entertained by the Emperor 'or by the Cabinet then at the head of affairs in France. 'But setting aside this odious supposition, what a picture 'of folly, inconsistency, and temerity, is presented to our 'view in the France of 1870, as she has been unworthily 'represented by the Imperial Government.

'We need scarcely stop for more than a moment to 'remark that in this almost preternatural perverseness 'the French Government had certainly given to the 'friendly Powers whose aid they asked a very serious 'ground of complaint, had there been a disposition to 'take advantage of it. Let us consider how the case 'stood between them. A State lays its grievance before 'its neighbours. It desires their assistance for its 'removal. They accede to the request and commit 'themselves in the cause, not in obedience to any 'clear dictate of justice, but on grounds of policy and

'prudence, and because of the great importance of 'giving satisfaction and so preventing bloodshed. They 'succeed in obtaining the demand they were asked to 'make. The complaining Power then changes its 'ground and refuses to accept at the hands of its friends 'what it had laid before them as the objects of its 'desires. We contend that this is a breach of a virtual 'covenant spontaneously undertaken, and is a proceeding 'wholly at variance with international obligations.' *

To sum up the motives which impelled France to her fate, it may be said, first, that the pretensions based upon the Napoleonic legend could ultimately have but two issues—war, or the patient subjection of Europe to France. These pretensions would, therefore, in themselves have ere long led to a rupture with any self-respecting Power. But among the subsidiary causes tending to drive the ill-fated Emperor to his ruin, three may be mentioned here—the popular desire for the 'frontier of the Rhine;' the intrigues of the Ultramontane party, who resented the displacement of Catholic Austria by Protestant Prussia, and the aid given to Italy by the latter; and the influence of two illustrious ladies, one of whom has always been distinguished for her strong and doubtless sincere attachment to the Holy See. Papers found by the Republican Government in the Tuileries, and published in 1871, leave little doubt that the Queen of Holland and the Empress, each from their own point of view, urged the Emperor to a war with Prussia.

Some persons may think that unnecessary pains have been here taken to fix the guilt of causing the late war

* If Mr. Gladstone's view be correct, it is clear that England, so far from being under any obligations to assist France, after her 'almost 'preternatural perverseness,' had a serious ground of quarrel with her.

on France, and not on her victor. But it may be some excuse for this persistence that so late as the 28th of September, 1872, a weekly paper of great ability, in reviewing *The School and the Army in Germany and France*, thus wrote:—

'General Hazen could not then have known, *what* '*all the world knows now* (!), that France was at last 'goaded into declaring war at the exact moment that was 'most opportune for Prussia.'

Of course, if that were so, the ex-Emperor was justified in his foreign policy; but that is not the opinion of the majority in France, nor, one would have thought, in England.

On what evidence does the assertion rest? If it be on the fact that Prussia had long foreseen and prepared for the war; that preparation was her first most obvious and imperative duty. When Frenchmen were so unprincipled as to clamour for the Rhine frontier, and so unreasonable as to talk of 'avenging Sadowa,' what Prussian could remain blind to the impending danger? But, in truth, long before Sadowa,—so soon as France, untaught by the events of 1814–15, recurred to Napoleonism (in 1851), a war for the Rhine became probable. If other Powers remained blind to the meaning of that restoration, Prussia at least would have had no excuse for doing so. A Napoleon has but one *raison d'être* in France—the revival of the evil traditions of the First Empire. They were revived; they were put in practice, and with exactly the same results. The Second Empire followed, but more ignobly, in the disastrous track of the First. In both cases the 'whiff of grape-shot,' the suppression of liberty at home, to be compensated by unjustifiable aggressions abroad; the same success at first, the same Imperial splendour, material prosperity, military triumphs; the same general mendacity and national demoralization. And then a mad and wicked

enterprise punished by defeat and utter overthrow, by subjugation and war indemnity and foreign occupation. History has repeated itself with wonderful exactness, and retribution has been meted out to all the characters in the drama with more than poetical justice.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE LATE PEACE.

It is obviously impossible to form a just opinion on the 'conditions of the late peace' without deciding how far the vanquished side was responsible for the previous war. Upon this account the last chapter was devoted—perhaps at unnecessary length—to prove that the responsibility of the rupture lay with France alone. If it be thought that that subject has lost its interest, it must be remembered that upon the questions 'growing out of it,' that is, the conditions of the peace, the future history of Europe may turn. There are English writers* who go the length of arguing that the severity of the terms imposed upon France will justify her in seeking her threatened *revanche* when prepared to do so. The opposite view is contended for in these pages. Assuming that France was the aggressor, and what is more certain, had very frequently been so before, there was one condition which the German people had a right to demand from their representatives above all others—that once for all the French game of invading Germany should be made, if not impossible, at least, dangerous, for France. That was a primary *sine qua non* consistently with which the terms of peace might be modified as policy dictated.

The general principles applicable to the terms of peace

* A clever writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who has always taken the side of France, expressed that opinion. His advocacy of the French cause would seem from internal evidence to be connected with long residence and perhaps closer ties with our gifted and amiable neighbours.

which a conqueror may justly impose upon the vanquished side, when that side is responsible for the war, seem few and simple.

1. The right of self-defence involves the right of taking security from the aggressor that he shall not repeat his aggressions, and the security may be penal as well as precautionary; common sense establishes such right, and it accords with our own municipal law, and probably with that of most other civilized countries.

2. The security taken must be decided by the conqueror, as there is no superior court for nations.

3. The amount of security will depend upon the greater or less probability of aggression as evinced by the character and antecedents of the aggressed, and the proportional strength of the belligerents. An approach to equality between them demands greater precautions than when the difference in strength is greatly in favour of the conqueror.

4. The fact of repetition, as aggravating the guilt of aggression, justifies a demand for additional securities and heavier penalties. This accords with municipal law, and the general sense and practice of mankind.

5. Independently of any guarantee against future attack, the conqueror may impose a fine or war indemnity as a punishment for the aggression. He may impose such fine either conjointly with some security or separately.

6. It is almost needless to add that the guarantees exacted from a vanquished aggressor, or the penalty imposed by way of war indemnity, must not violate the laws of humanity, as did the devastation of the Palatinate by the armies of the Most Christian King Louis XIV.

These principles seem not only to agree with the common sense of mankind, but with the practice of the most civilized nations from time to time, including the great settlement of Europe of 1815.

The conditions imposed upon France by Germany do not clash with these principles, but they have been denounced by some persons of authority as unduly severe, or even unjust. It has been argued—

Firstly, that to deprive France of Alsace and part of Lorraine was an act of oppression not justified by military exigencies, and that the inhabitants of these districts should have been consulted as to their own fate.

Secondly, that the war indemnity of 200,000,000*l.* was excessive, and that Germany, in electing to take French territory, virtually ceded her right to a pecuniary penalty, as, by electing to take a pecuniary indemnity, she would have lost her right to retain territory. That to take both territory and money was an indefensible and unexampled proceeding.

The article in the *Edinburgh Review*, generally attributed to Mr. Gladstone, is very severe upon the iniquity of taking provinces without the consent of the inhabitants, and would, at all events, have had such a 'plébiscite' as had been sanctified by the example of Napoleon III. when annexing Savoy and Nice. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone thinks that, had a vote of 'Non' instead of 'Oui' been possible, it would have saved the inhabitants of Nice and Savoy from annexation. Von Bismarck, however, was not the man to manipulate ballot-boxes. If the consent of its inhabitants to the transfer of territory is to be a condition precedent of the transfer, it strikes one as unfortunate that such consent should not be made necessary to the operations of war as well as of peace. A worse fate often befalls the inhabitant of an invaded district or bombarded town than losing his nationality. A man who has lost his whole family and fortune probably thinks little of the national cockade he wears. In any case, the acquisition of a good frontier *might* be a military necessity; and, to make it dependent upon the wishes of the inhabitants, is an idea more amiable than

practical. The negociators of the Treaty of Vienna, among whom our Minister was not the least influential personage, had no scruple about transferring provinces, and even countries, from one government to another without consulting the populations. The first consideration with them was the arrangements that would best restrain the aggressiveness of France, shown by experience to be the chief peril to Europe. Prussia complained at that time that the frontier assigned to her was bad in a military sense, but the great Powers over-ruled her objections.

That the frontier now ceded by France is traced by consummate military skill we may assume upon the reputations of those who traced it, and that it does not exceed the military requirements of Germany is rendered probable by the fact that Belfort—a stronger position than any retained—has been voluntarily restored to France. Report says that Von Moltke was opposed to that concession, and, if so, the fact that his wishes did not prevail says much for the moderation of the Germans.

In any case, out of forty departments conquered and occupied, Germany retained but three and part of another —a territory all of which belonged to her formerly, and part of which had been dishonourably filched from her in peace.*

Strasburg has been justly called one of the keys of Germany, and was, for that reason, treacherously seized by Louis XIV. in 1681. So far back as the beginning of last century, when the victories of Marlborough had reduced the fortunes of that great King and appropriator to a low ebb, it was proposed to restore Strasburg to Germany. The idea was revived in the middle of the

* About the iniquitous seizure of Strasburg by Louis XIV. in full peace there can be no doubt. Whether the Bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun were filched by France, or ceded by Germany, in gratitude to her, has been disputed.

century during the Seven Years' War, and the time that has elapsed since then has shown, on many occasions, the immense danger to Germany of a French Strasburg. To have restored such a base of invasion to France might have been chivalrous, but would scarcely have been sane; and the same reasoning applies to all the frontier fortresses, such as Brisach, Bitche, &c. With respect to the territory taken from France in addition to fortresses, even Mr. Gladstone, though so scrupulous about the patriotic sentiments of the inhabitants, admits * that considerations of military security *may* justify the annexation of districts. 'We do not dispute the title of 'Germany, as matters stand, to be secured by special 'stipulations: to place France under such limitations in 'regard to the exercise of her sovereignty in the districts 'claimed as shall virtually guarantee their military 'neutrality; nay, to extort the territory itself from 'France provided the population be willing parties to the 'severance; but not until it has been proved that transfer 'of the territory is the only way of giving security to 'Germany, can she be justified in even raising the ques-'tion without some reference to that essential element.'* This is substantially to admit the claims of Germany in principle, since to make a right arising out of considerations of national security—in this case of the lives and property of the German people—subordinate to a mere sentiment, is only an amiable crotchet having no place in public law or policy.

That Germany retained more territory than she required for her security is possible, but does not seem probable, since no man was more aware of the anti-German feeling prevalent in the districts claimed, and of the element of danger implied in their annexation, than Prince Bismarck. The new frontier line is understood to have been selected by the most competent military

* *Edinburgh Review*, No. 270, October, 1870, p. 582.

advisers of the Empire, and, indeed, has all the indications of a defensive and strategical demarcation. That it should have been so far advanced in the North as to comprehend Thionville and Metz, though considered a grievance by the French, was obviously of military importance, and where strategical considerations allowed of it, the line is deflected suddenly towards the East, excluding both Nancy and Luneville, though the Moselle and the Meurthe, rivers both offering a natural frontier, were thereby abandoned.

Unless, however, we accept the authority of the German engineers, it is hard to arrive at any clear conclusion as to how much territory Germany—unjustly attacked for the tenth or twelfth time, perhaps, since 1700—could fairly take, or, rather, resume from France. There is, however, one moral rule, confirmed by its accordance with a higher law, which bears upon the question. It would approve itself to most minds if an absolute arbiter, in a dispute between two nations, were to sentence that one whose greed of territory led him to attack his neighbour to forfeit as much territory as he had hoped to gain. The rule 'With the same measure that ye mete withal, 'shall it be measured to you again,' would seem just here. Though no one would say—scarcely M. Thiers himself—that the cruel oppressions practised by Napoleon I. towards Prussia should be made a precedent,* it would not be hard to the nation that clamoured for Prussian territory to amerce it in the same amount that it proposed

* The *Quarterly Review*, in an article in the January number, 1871, applies a scriptural allusion to Prussia in a singular manner. 'Like the cruel servant who went out from the presence of his 'infinitely forgiving master to clutch his miserable fellow-servant by the 'throat, with the demand for the uttermost farthing of his little debt, the 'Prussian Monarch resolved that the cup of humiliation should be drained 'by his helpless enemy to the last bitter dregs.' Was it then a 'little 'debt' which France owed to Prussia for taking half her territory, all her treasure, and mercilessly trampling upon her for five years?

to rob its neighbours. It is here assumed that France—emphatically, France—whether Imperialist or of any other party, did, in accordance with a desire long entertained and freely professed, intend to rob Prussia of her Rhenish Provinces, and, curiously enough, the article already quoted, and attributed to Mr. Gladstone, furnishes some evidence on the point. The writer quotes, in the spirit of perfect fairness which pervades the article, though it is marked with some of the peculiar characteristics of Mr. Gladstone, an extract from the *Daily News* of September 15th, 1870, prefacing it with the remark—'There appeared a letter *friendly* to France in its 'general upshot, from which we extract the following 'passage. We fear that the list it comprises is not far 'from being correct:—"The Orleanist, the moderate '"Liberal, the Republican—in short, the whole of '"France shared, and share it still. Men of all parties '"expressed it; the Roman Catholic Montalembert, the '"apostle of Free Trade Michel Chevalier, the Orleanist. '"Thiers, the moderate Republican Jules Favre, the '"Republican poet Victor Hugo, the Socialist Repub-'"licans Louis Blanc and Barbès, and all their parties '"and followers, spoke and wrote of the necessary '"acquisition of the left bank of the Rhine, and the '"division and humiliation of Germany."' The writer of that passage might have added to the list of French authorities who confessed an ardent desire to rob their neighbour of provinces to which France has no more right than Germany has to Paris, the name of Prevost-Paradol, one of the least 'chauvinist' writers of France, quoted by Mr. Grant Duff.* To this array of statesmen,

* Mr. G. Duff relates a conversation he had with M. Prevost-Paradol thus:—'We were discussing the decrees of November 24th, 'which, as you will remember, made a material and salutary change in 'the constitution established after the *Coup-d'état*, when my friend 'observed,—"Well, France seems to me between two great fortunes;

orators, and writers who so lately advocated spoliation, must be added the government which actually attempted it, and are we to be told that such a nation needed no lesson and that it has not met with most righteous retribution? Germany has not meted out to France by any means with French measure, for whatever may be said of the terms imposed by Germany on France, they are almost absurdly mild compared with those which Napoleon I. imposed upon Prussia. Nor can France under another Napoleon or a Thiers disavow the acts of the French idol in whose steps Napoleon III. was striving to follow.

But there are Frenchmen, and many who would have been loud in their boasting had the attack on Prussia succeeded, who now disclaim any aggressive desires and think that to blame the late Government is to exculpate France. Others, like Erckmann-Chatrian, who were always friends of peace, are loud in denouncing as *ces imbéciles* the men who ruled the country for twenty years. There are few chapters in the *Plébiscite* which do not contain that epithet applied to Napoleon III., and those who served him; but if they were such 'imbeciles,' what was the country which allowed itself to be governed by them? If a man in private life having been brought to shame and ruin by his own conduct should plead that it was all the fault of the 'imbecile' friend whose advice had been implicitly followed for years past, we should wonder which was the greater imbecile. Certainly France, who professed to lead and rule Europe, cannot 'plead infancy,' and Germany, at all events, is not bound to accept the plea. The country that accepts a Bonaparte as ruler does not thereby express its dislike of

' " either we shall have more liberty at home or we shall have the frontier ' " of the Rhine." '—Elgin *Speeches*, p. 15. A thoroughly French sentiment! Where is the Frenchman who would not exchange liberty for 'La Gloire' to-morrow?

Napoleonism, nor is there even now the least proof of French penitence. True, Napoleon is dethroned, but the high-priest of the Napoleonic worship is in his place. If the French press did not (unintentionally) misrepresent M. Thiers, his first orders in Paris were for the restoration of the Place Vendôme Column, though there were other restorations needed at the time. His next care was the army, not a *defensive* army—France had that already, and never required it less—but an army able to rehabilitate the Napoleonic legend. Wherever the foreign policy of M. Thiers peeped out, its spirit was not less aggressive in the utter prostration of France than in her prosperity. Respecting the occupation of her capital by Italy, M. Thiers openly avowed that 'my poverty, 'not my will, consents;' he would have prevented it if he could. When the Porte communicated to the French Government that Tunis had, as in duty bound, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sultan, M. Thiers, in pursuance of his old 'Mediterranean a French Lake' policy, refused to recognize the communication. Men at a certain age cannot change their opinions, but there is no more evidence of change in France than in her President.

To do justice to Germany in reference to the conditions exacted by her, we must endeavour to see the case of the two belligerents from the German point of view. No manner of doubt could exist in the German mind as to who was the aggressor, equally little as to the object of the aggression. The late war is already named, and will be known in German history as 'The War for 'the Rhine.' The reading, observant public of Germany could quote the text of every French writer from Beranger with his *Le Rhin lui seul peut retremper nos armes*, down to the latest pamphleteer who advocated the seizure of the German river. But the aggressor of 1870 was the habitual aggressor, the hereditary invader and despoiler of Germany, and she was so, not as the result of unfore-

seen strife between neighbours, but upon principle, and in accordance with that gospel of strife and robbery—the Napoleonic legend. The German people, on the other hand—*all* the South German, all the Northern non-Prussian States, and all Prussia itself, except, perhaps, the military caste—were conscious of desiring peace with all their hearts, and felt justly indignant at what they believed to be a scandalous and unprovoked aggression. They saw, moreover, by the unusual manner in which the diplomatic negociations were forced onwards to a predetermined rupture, a desire to effect a surprise. When, therefore, German blood had flowed like water, in defeating a wicked aggression, the first duty of Germany seemed to be to take such measures as should obviate a similar danger. 'Whatever else we do,' the Germans might justly say, 'we must tie the hands of France for 'the future.' With the actual rulers of Germany another consideration must have given force to this conviction. They knew as a fact that France, in pursuance of the old Napoleonic policy, had proposed, in default of spoiling Germany, to seize (without a shadow of a pretext even) upon Belgium. In other words, they had proof that a French Government could in the present day act with as complete disregard of honour and honesty as ever the First Napoleon or Louis XIV. had done. If, then, existing treaties—to which France herself was a party—could not protect Belgium, Germany must rely upon something stronger than treaties.

But still further the progress of the war revealed traits of French character, which at once justified the distrust and kindled the animosity of the Germans. The descendants of the old Teutons, with the faults, had the virtues of their ancestors, and were eminently lovers of truth. In their French experiences they daily saw facts of which they had personal knowledge either utterly denied, or wilfully misrepresented by the French

press, and on the testimony of people who well knew the statements to be false. They saw vainglorious boasting and calumny * based upon wilful untruths, until they came to think that veracity had no place among their enemies, and that material guarantees alone could be relied upon for future security against a people declared by German writers of note to be *incorrigible*.

A farther consideration must not be overlooked here. Prussia does not forget the merciless and ungenerous treatment she met with at the hands of the First Napoleon after Jena; and, though Englishmen who were not the sufferers may argue against visiting the sins of one generation upon another, they omit an essential point in the argument. France of 1870 was not necessarily responsible for the spoliations and tyranny of Napoleon in 1806-7-8, but she could, and did, make herself morally responsible for them by assuming, in French phrase, 'solidarity' with his policy,† making it her boast and taking the first steps towards following it. Who made war on Prussia in

* One would have thought that even in their hatred of the German, French writers might have abstained from imputing cowardice to their conquerors; but about the time of Sedan a French paper circulated a piece of *history* to the following effect:—A Bavarian regiment of cavalry attacked by a troop of our gallant 'Chasseurs à cheval' of Algeria (natives), fled in a most cowardly manner. The Chasseurs indignant at the sight, but restrained from polluting their swords with such blood by the traditions of their race, galloped after the fugitives, striking them behind with the flat of their swords. Those gallant children of the Prophet, &c. &c. One can imagine gallant old Von der Tann reading this vivacious tale.

† Taking an extreme argument used by apologists for France, that to make her responsible for the First Napoleon's sins is like making Englishmen responsible for the human sacrifices of their forefathers; it admits of the same answer. Had we placed a man upon the throne in 1851, because he represented the principle of human sacrifices, had we adopted another ruler because he glorified that principle, we should make ourselves morally responsible for the crime.

1870? The heir of the spoiler of 1806. Who rules France now? The inventor of the Napoleonic legend. Germany, then, was fully justified in believing that she saw before her men imbued with the lawless principles (or lack of principles) of the First Empire, and bent upon humbling and despoiling her. But does any one doubt that France intended to seize the Rhenish Provinces?

Admitting then, what cannot be denied, that Germans must have seen the question in this light, it is hard to understand why they should not have taken any number of French departments—two or twenty—that seemed necessary for the security of Germany. The two considerations before them were—

The security of Germany, with all that it involves, on the one side.

The patriotic sentiments of certain persons in Alsace and Lorraine on the other.

Had the Germans hesitated between the two they would have been more or less than men; but the German negociators were not even at liberty to be unwisely generous. They were trustees for all Germany, whose first duty was, so far as lay in their power, to make French invasions dangerous, if not impracticable. The ruler who could have done this and forbore to do it, would have forfeited his claims to the allegiance of his subjects. It is a very subordinate consideration that certain Frenchmen should have to wear thenceforward a German cockade instead of that which may distinguish the Empire, Monarchy, Anarchy, Republic, Revolution, or Chaos of France. That obligation may very possibly come to be considered a benefit by those concerned, who are, after all, Germans by race and in language. There are even now symptoms of this in Alsace.

There remains the complaint, 'That the war 'indemnity of five milliards was excessive,' and that

Germany, by taking it, virtually ceded all right to a territorial indemnity.

This view is supported by the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1871, in a striking article which imputes to Germany a dangerous ambition, and a contempt for the rights of the weak. With reference to the complaint that Germany exacted both territory and a pecuniary indemnity, it certainly appears a rather arbitrary rule, which, in such a case, would preclude a Power, unjustly assailed, from taking more than one kind of guarantee from the aggressor. If the object in view (security) be legitimate, and the means adopted be each in itself legitimate, there seems no reason why the end may not be attained by several means as well as by one single method. For instance, had the French fleet been as great a danger to Germany as the French army, no one could see any reason, in the nature of things, why it should not have been demanded in addition to territory and pecuniary indemnity. Or had the attack been made on England, as might have happened, for resenting the proposed robbery of Belgium, might we not, if successful, have demanded the French fleet and a war indemnity besides? Had the case been our own, and we had seen an unjust invasion of our own soil, headed by those pioneers of 'Liberty and Civilization,' the Turcos—had we seen them picking out the eyes of their prisoners, should we have been very merciful?

With reference to the amount of the indemnity, it might, as an abstract possibility, be excessive. Was it so? To say that it was enormous and unparalleled does not prove that it was greater than the circumstances justified. Any indemnity that France could by possibility have paid in 1815, for instance, would now be but a small penalty. It follows that a penalty, heavy in the present day, would necessarily be 'unparalleled.' To be deemed excessive it should exceed the amount

required to obtain the end in view—the security of Germany—or it should be inhuman, as reducing a people to a state of penury and suffering; but it remains to be proved that a less indemnity would have answered the purpose of deterring France from aggression, and no one can assert that the amount exacted has reduced the French people to penury. So far is France from penury that her financial prosperity, interrupted by the war, has actually increased in 1872 above the standard of 1869, and her credit is so good that the late loan of 120,000,000*l.* was subscribed five times over in France alone.*

Still, two hundred millions sterling is an immense sum. It is rather above two years' purchase of the national taxation; it is (even at four per cent.) a tax of 4*s.* 5*d.* per head of the French population; it is as much as the forty years' *extra* cost of our own navy due to French naval rivalry; and it is one-fourth the debt that England is still saddled with, thanks to the Napoleonism, which has proved still more costly to France. The ransom will, as it was intended to do, leave France less able to indulge in the luxury of war, but it would not have made her any poorer had she really been content to abandon her traditional pastime. The economy that France might effect in the cost of her army and navy, were she satisfied with merely defensive armaments, would not be less than eight millions annually. But under a sincerely pacific policy her wealth would increase so rapidly that the war indemnity loan could easily be converted into four per cent. stock, the interest on which would be defrayed by the eight millions saved. Of course that would be the last thing which M. Thiers, with his Napoleonic ideas, would dream

* Success of any kind seems too trying for French patriotism. The popularity of the late loan has been interpreted as proving the sympathy of Europe with France. If six per cent. evoked sympathy, seven would have aroused enthusiasm; but the French overlook that fact.

of. France must have 1,200,000 soldiers, more *available* sailors than England, and as many ships. She must also prepare for 'La Revanche,' to rehabilitate the Napoleonic legend. She has a right to expend her own income as she sees fit, but she cannot complain that Germany did not leave her more resources for war.

Measured, then, by the past, the war indemnity imposed by Germany is certainly unparalleled, though future history may lead us to think it moderate. Assuredly if France attacks Germany again, as most Frenchmen desire, and should be worsted, the fine imposed will not leave such large resources for warlike preparations. Whether even that penalty would be a real evil to France or the world, may be doubted, but in the present case it is clear that France has not been ruined by exactions, nor, it is to be feared, quite cured of her disastrous delusions.*

While, then, we may contest the assertion that to exact a cession of territory, or of money, or of both, is contrary to public law and morality, or that the exaction in this case was indefensibly heavy, there remains the question of policy. Was it politic in Germany to enforce such heavy penalties on a conquered people, though in strict justice she had the right to do so? There are English authorities who argue that when the crushing defeat of Sedan had destroyed the Government responsible for the war, peace should have been made immediately, and the German armies withdrawn. Had the only object of the German Government been to repel an attack, and to gain great military advantages culminating in a decisive victory, they might have been satisfied with such a 'lame and impotent conclusion.' But it is in the German nature to be 'thorough,' and the object aimed

* It is fair to France, however, to say that a few of her best writers have laboured, and are still striving to destroy the fatal delusion as to French superiority engendered by M. Thiers and his Napoleonic legend.

at was not attained even by the overwhelming catastrophe of Sedan. That defeat overthrew Napoleon III., but not Napoleonism. The whole blame would have been thrown upon 'The Empire,' and the Empire being got rid of, Frenchmen would have expected victory to return to their standard as a natural and necessary consequence. Though no defeat could have been more complete than that of Sedan, it was the capture of an army, not the conquest of the country; for the nation that defiantly refused to yield 'an inch of our territory or a stone of 'our fortresses' was still (at least, in its own opinion) unconquered. To the German leaders it seemed necessary to teach the French people that they were thoroughly subdued, and had no choice but submission. To that conviction they were irresistibly compelled when the whole country had been summoned to relieve the metropolis, and in a period of five months had helplessly though gallantly striven to do so, though in vain. The position of France after Sedan was totally different from what it became when the whole nation had to acknowledge its inability to relieve the capital. Sedan was the stunning blow which prostrated the Empire, but, had the several phrases invented by Frenchmen been true, it would not have prostrated France. 'Whenever France 'stamps her foot an army springs up,' was believed by Frenchmen to be not merely a phrase but a fact. 'All 'France is a soldier' expressed the same idea, and other misconceptions of the facts of history led to an implicit belief in raw Republican levies as able to compensate for want of discipline by enthusiasm. But while the really wonderful exertions of M. Gambetta in extemporizing immense armies afforded the opportunity for testing such boasts, the results showed that Frenchmen were subject to exactly the same conditions in war as their neighbours.

The regular army captured, or cooped up within walls, no superiority of numbers enabled the new levies to keep

the field when attacked. All France lay at the mercy of her assailants, and could only await the inevitable fall of the metropolis. She was like a man who is not only prostrated by his powerful antagonist, but is held down vainly struggling until he submits.

To such condition of explicit submission it was the resolution of Germany to reduce her enemy, nor is it possible to deny her right to do so, or to blind ourselves to the policy of a course which the character and habits of Frenchmen alike recommended. The only resource left to France after a brief campaign was a guerilla or partisan warfare, and this was rendered hopeless by the Germans' refusal to acknowledge the Franc-tireurs as soldiers. The conduct of the German military authorities has been impugned for treating the Franc-tireurs as brigands, but it was according to precedent, and, on the whole, favourable to humanity. Jules Favre urged on Von Bismarck the practice of Prussia herself, and Bismarck replied, 'True, and our trees bear the marks of 'the Prussian free-shooters whom you hanged.' Wellington, on crossing the Bidassoa into France, warned the peasants that they would be shot if taken in arms. But, in truth, as was said in 1870, the French free-shooters were often freebooters, and a court-martial held at Versailles last November only, afforded proof of the fact. A Captain Geollot, with a lieutenant and ten men (Franc-tireurs) were proved to have murdered their own countrymen and Germans with perfect impartiality.

When the news of Sedan reached England the desire of every generous mind was to see Germany make a noble use of her victory and terminate the war by an act of clemency which would have ennobled her triumph.

The aspiration, however, was more generous than wise, for it overlooked the national untruthfulness and 'Chauvinism,' which both caused the late war and prolonged it, and which would, by misrepresenting its

history, have led to its speedy renewal. The Germans were not allowed to shut their eyes to this view while the French press afforded daily proofs of a manner of dealing with facts about which the invaders could not be mistaken. In the utter distortion of events then present the Germans saw sufficient evidence of the manner in which those same events would be related when they became matter of history. The Germans knew that it would cost their ingenious adversaries little trouble and no shame to convert the campaign of 1870 into an affair of very small proportions, or possibly a pre-arranged political plot to get rid at once of the Emperor and Empire. Had the war terminated at Sedan it might have been described as a surprise, a repulse on the frontier due to 'treason' (of course) in the first place, and overwhelming superiority of numbers. Sedan would have been accounted for by the military ignorance and imbecility of a civilian Emperor playing at soldiering, and Bazaine, perhaps, would have been the hero of Metz, the terror of the Prussians, and the idol of his countrymen. To the vast majority of Frenchmen who only knew the events of the war through the French press, the many 'brilliant 'victories' achieved around Metz against unparalleled odds would have seemed to maintain the mythical invincibility of Frenchmen, and as the national and military resources would have then remained but little impaired, there might have been an early cry for the 'Revanche' to wash out the slight stain of Sedan.*

But it was exactly to crush Chauvinism, and to leave

* To any one who has not studied the nature of French Chauvinism this may seem an exaggerated view of the possible perversion of history. But Napoleon I., whose mendacity equalled his military genius, has had many followers. When he described the greatest of naval battles in modern times (Trafalgar), in a bulletin, as 'the loss of some ships in a 'storm, after a battle imprudently fought,' the master struck the key-note which the pupils (including Thiers on this occasion) have religiously repeated.

no excuse for these perversions of history, that the German policy was directed, and this is to be borne in mind as explaining some acts of the Germans apparently inconsistent with their character. The moral of the Napoleonic legend,

> to France the spring
> Of woes unnumbered,

was that French soldiers had no equals—were, in fact, invincible. This Q. E. D. of M. Thiers was of course disposed of by beating them—with superior forces, it is true, on some occasions, but with equal or inferior on others. There was, however, more than this required by the German programme. The Napoleonic legend had glossed over the defeats of 1813–14–15 as being due only to a European coalition against France, and from ignorance of history average Frenchmen believed that the struggle of France against such odds was unexampled. They were not aware that Prussia (in her infancy) had not only fought against such giants as Russia, France, and the Empire (Sweden also) during the Seven Years' War, but had come out of the struggle victorious instead of vanquished. Germany was resolved to show that unaided she was more than a match for France,* and to destroy the very foundations of that military Chauvinism which had been alike the curse of Europe and of France herself. On this account, beyond the entire overthrow of the military power of France, and the exaction of territory and a pecuniary indemnity, the German leaders insisted upon conditions apparently out of harmony with their practical and unostentatious character. They insisted that Paris—the symbol of French strength and pride, Paris, according to the bombast of Victor Hugo and

* It must strike every student of the late war as remarkable that victory seemed to adhere to the German standards equally, whether they were borne by the well-tried Prussian Legions, the Saxons, the Bavarians, or the Baden troops. Each division of Germany had its own especial triumphs, and all bore themselves equally well.

others, 'The Heart,' 'The Brain,' 'The Light of the 'Universe,' 'The Sanctuary,' 'The Shrine of the 'World'—should be profaned by the invaders' hoofs. They crowned their Emperor in the Temple erected 'To All the Glories of France,' and seemed to take an ungenerous pleasure in humiliating their conquered foe.

Yet it may be fairly assumed that while Von Bismarck was not free from that human weakness which rejoices in triumphing over an enemy, he was more guided by policy than feeling, and saw a solid advantage in that historical march of the German army through the 'Arc 'de Triomphe,' and down that magnificent avenue which had often witnessed the triumphant entry of French armies. Doubtless he foresaw that although Paris was in a military sense as much at the mercy of an enemy holding all the forts commanding it as if that enemy occupied the city, still the inveterate habit of fiction might find in the fact that the German army had not entered the city, ground for asserting that it was unable to do so. On this account, as well as others perhaps, the German army occupied Paris for some forty-eight hours, and thus the conquest of France was complete and established beyond the ingenuity of future legendary historians to deny.

How much has that untruthfulness, the natural parent of French boasting and vanity, to answer for! And is it not in accordance with our deepest moral convictions that this should be so? Do we not believe that all morals, all religion, must be founded upon truth and regard for truth? Do we not as parents teach our children, as their first lesson, that Truth is never to be tampered with? and is it not our implicit belief that the whole moral nature of man is lowered when truthfulness is disregarded? That which is true of each individual in a community must be true of the whole, and if a nation becomes untruthful it will be morally lowered.

It is not for English writers to bring a charge of untruthfulness against the French nation, but it is the charge of French authorities, whose patriotism cannot be doubted, and who, in the bitterness of their grief at the national disasters, have sought their moral causes.

Thus we find the distinguished and patriotic Bishop of Orleans, M. Dupanloup, saying, 'We had almost 'ceased to speak the truth. . . . Truth was banished 'in almost every rank by extravagant luxury, and driven 'from almost every hearth.' M. Lemoinne says in the *Débats:* 'The first cause of France's misfortunes has 'been *Falsehood;* not only have we been lied to, but we 'have lied to ourselves.' We find M. le Comte A. de Gasparin saying, 'Respect for truth is the almost 'infallible test of moral worth, whether in an individual or 'a nation. From the beginning of the war to the end 'they have lied to us, and we have borne it. From the 'time of Count Palikao to M. Gambetta we had gained 'an uninterrupted series of victories. There were sorties 'from Metz; the successive triumphs of the relieving 'army; Berlin burnt; the King of Prussia gone mad; the '*levée en masse*—three million men, not one less; the 'Germans utterly crushed (*écrasés*) here, annihilated 'there, weeping everywhere; around Paris every morning 'they butt-end these poor creatures, while there is reserved 'for Bourbaki's army the easy task of finishing them once 'for all. In some places this is carried so far that the 'idea of a war indemnity is rejected, and it is a question 'whether it should not rather be imposed upon the enemy. 'From the beginning these illusions so possessed us that 'M. Thiers, beginning his great diplomatic tour in London, 'asked quite naturally the armed intervention of all Europe 'in the interest of European equilibrium!' *

It would be easy to multiply French quotations to

* *La France, nos Fautes, nos Périls, notre Avenir*, vol. ii. 25, 26.

the same effect; but it is within the recollection of everybody that the only reports from the seat of war which could be at all relied upon were those of the foreign correspondents, and the official bulletins of the Germans. The French accounts were only quoted as showing how much they contrasted with the known facts. The Germans were said to cover their movements by a 'fringe of cavalry.' The French, but without any military reason, in most cases, may be said to have covered theirs by a fringe of lies.

That the Germans—a truthful people who held falsehood in abhorrence—should distrust a nation which they thought gave such proofs of untruthfulness, and insist upon the most effectual guarantees, was only natural. Von Bismarck did not conceal his belief that the French would only make peace to prepare for war, and he resolved to have some better security for the observance of a treaty than the signature of a French plenipotentiary. The negociations, as conducted by M. Jules Favre* and M. Thiers, are matter of history. Every one must do honour to the veteran statesman who traversed all Europe in vain to find allies for his suffering country, but must, at the same time, wonder at his blindness and infatuation. Surely it was a sight for men and angels when the grey-haired author of *Le Consulat et l'Empire*,

* M. Jules Favre, who gives his own vindication in two volumes, containing together near 900 pages, does not anywhere admit using the memorable *pas un pouce* himself, though adopting the principle. Yet in all the reports of the negociations with V. Bismarck he is represented as using the very words. Instead of seeing in that arrogance the cause of the negociations failing, he, without the smallest reason, lays the fault on her Majesty's Prussian partialities! (vol. ii. p. 66), to which he attributes the loss of '100,000 lives and the immense 'ruin.' 'C'est à cet accident dynastique qu'ont éte sacrifiés tant et 'de si grands intérêts.' Poor Jules Favre had the misfortune of having Gambetta as his purveyor of intelligence (and what intelligence!) during the siege of Paris.

the inventor of the Napoleonic legend, was pleading the cause of peace and moderation towards the vanquished in a war where a Napoleon had been the aggressor and Prussia the conqueror! How the thought of the merciless terms imposed upon Prussia by France must have recurred to M. Thiers, and how much must Von Bismarck have felt tempted to address him, 'What hast '*thou* to do with peace?' Another negociator might have used the argument which finds favour in England —that the bad practices of former days were not to be precedents in the present. But it was not in the mouth of the eulogist of Napoleon I. to condemn his example, nor to blame his nephew for following it. The cycle of events had moved round, and in sixty years the negociators of France and Germany met again; but the parts were reversed. It was now Prussia that imposed, and France that had to accept, conditions. Happily for her, she found in King William a more merciful conqueror than Napoleon I.

It is not probable that a statesman of M. Thiers' experience and ability expected to obtain better terms than those which were actually obtained from his clear-sighted antagonist; but, in his negociations with the British Cabinet, he seems to have greatly under-rated the good sense and firmness which, fortunately for England, marked the diplomacy of Earl Granville. It is a common delusion in France to suppose that countries in alliance with her are, therefore, under obligations to her, as if alliances did not imply a common interest and mutual advantage. M. Thiers seems to have urged the obligations of England to France, and the *duty* of succouring her, in a tone hardly respectful to our Government. In fact, if he really used to Mr. Gladstone the language reported to M. Favre, it was nothing less than impertinent; * and, while

* 'I said to him' (Mr. Gladstone) 'just now, in the interview

we may understand Mr. Gladstone looking 'annoyed (importuné),' we may wonder at his looking no more.

In the issue M. Thiers, as every one knows, failed to convince England, Austria, Russia, and Italy that the terms upon which peace was offered to France were unreasonable, or such as would justify the interference invoked, or even a mediation not demanded by Germany. M. Jules Favre has given us his discussions with Von Bismarck, who seems to have conceded to him a personal claim to favour as an opponent of the war, but to have shown that Germany had on her side other arguments than that of the sword.

France had finally to acquiesce in the terms offered. She had, beyond the loss of her armies, her fortresses, and her military prestige, to surrender provinces, and to pay a heavy indemnity; but she had not to pay the further penalty which she fully expected, and had imposed even upon friendly countries invaded by the First Republic or by the First Bonaparte. The most precious works of art had been removed from Paris in expectation of a demand for their surrender; but the capital which had enriched itself by the spoils of all Europe, with little regard to friend or foe, did not lose a statue or a painting,* neither were the fears of France for her public monuments justified by the event. Not one was touched

'which I shall report in the continuation of this despatch: "England, who "was angry when Napoleon told her she was exclusively a Maritime "Power, forgetting her part when she meddled with continental affairs, "now acknowledges that he was right; for certainly she does what he "desired, and leaves the Continent to itself, without daring to have any "opinion on what passes there." Mr. Gladstone made no answer and 'kept silent like a man grieved and annoyed.'—M. Thiers' Despatch to M. Jules Favre, as given by the latter.

* When the Allies occupied Paris, in 1815, they found there the treasures of art of which the Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and Belgian galleries had been robbed. An English diplomatist exclaimed upon the occasion,—'What a vast emporium of stolen goods!' The

by the Germans — those 'barbarians' who were supposed to be burning with the vindictive desire to destroy the Arc de Triomphe and the Bridge of Jena. The better sense of the Teuton taught him to see in those monuments the landmarks which testified to his own progress since the days when a divided Germany fell an easy prey to united France. Whatever was done in the way of wanton destruction was done by the Parisian 'intelligent and devoted population,' which M. Jules Favre would not permit Von Bismarck to call a 'mob.' Upon a third point the Germans showed more forbearance than was expected by many, both in France and England. There was a very general expectation that a large part, if not the whole, of the French fleet would have been required. As that fleet had swept the German commerce from the seas, threatened the Northern coasts, blockaded all the German ports, and was, moreover, utterly disproportioned to the relative commerce and importance of the two countries, and a perpetual danger to Germany, the demand would not have been unreasonable, and could easily have been enforced. The all-powerful conquerors took not a single ship, leaving it in the power of France to blockade every port, and destroy the immense commerce of the German Empire.

It is not easy to assign a reason for this forbearance on the part of a statesman like Von Bismarck, neither prone to weakness nor forgetfulness. If one might presume to conjecture a motive, it would be that, feeling certain France would recover her aggressiveness when she recovered her strength, it might be well to leave her the means of attacking some power less prepared than Germany. Is it possible that among the papers left by

spoil, at the request of the lawful owners, was justly restored to them by the Allies. The French Minister of Public Instruction, M. Jules Simon, cited this fact lately as a hardship to France! Such is her instruction.

M. Rouher, the interim Foreign Minister, at Cerçay, and so opportunely seized by the Germans, there were other 'Projects of Treaty' besides the memorable Benedetti treachery? If there had been in the same portfolio rough sketches of a little surprise to be executed against the richest and the least prepared nation of Europe, it would explain more than one difficulty, and would show that the possibility of England resenting a treacherous attack upon her Belgian ally had not been overlooked. That Napoleon III. was by long habit, if not by nature, a conspirator, has always been asserted and believed, and, as he did conspire against England in the Belgian affair, it is not uncharitable to suppose he might on many other occasions.* At all events, he expended more money proportionally in putting his navy on an equal footing with our own than in guarding his Eastern frontier. He certainly did not expect an English aggression; if he had no idea of aggression upon England he wasted much time and money.

Thus the conditions of peace imposed upon France by Germany, if harsher than we expected in some respects, were milder in others. Thus Englishmen who, rejoicing in their own security, or fancied security, beyond the 'silver streak of sea,' see things from the French point of view, will consider the terms unnecessarily harsh. The Germans may well be excused if they feel as we should feel had we lost our dearest relatives and 100,000 fellow-countrymen in resisting a French invasion. They may well be excused if they feel as we should on reflecting that the pretext of the war was utterly false, and that vanity, with the desire to seize upon Kent as too good for an inferior race, was the real ground of aggression.

* The *Times* observes, October 12, 1872, 'The Bonapartes are 'nothing unless conspirators,' and such certainly is their character, not only in France, but everywhere.

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCE AND GERMANY AFTER THE PEACE.

It was asserted in the last chapter that the conditions of peace had left the financial and industrial resources of France almost unimpaired, and rapidly recovering. It might be added that the loss of territory is scarcely perceptible to the eye which compares the maps of France in 1869 and 1872. But, though such is the case, it is not the less wonderful how much has been destroyed, and in one sense how little of French social and political organization can be said to remain. For it is not the superstructure only which has been destroyed — that might excite little surprise in a country whose political constitution is so often overthrown—but it is the very foundations of government, order, and property, which have been swept away. And this has been in several respects but an indirect and casual result of the German conquests. That event has revealed rather than caused the existing disorganization and political chaos. Of course the utter overthrow of the whole military power of France, followed, as was natural in that country, by a revolution, must have for a time dislocated, if not destroyed, the whole political organization of France as it would anywhere else. Indeed, it is matter of surprise that the functions of government were so well discharged during a disastrous war and invasion. But, the war over, it was a new and striking feature in French history

that a period of utter helplessness and hopelessness succeeded. A people highly gifted with inventiveness and the talent of organization, usually sanguine and enterprising beyond all others, seemed to lose all energy and confidence. No word better expresses this state than does 'collapse'—a collapse political, social, and even intellectual.

A French writer * already quoted says, 'We require a 'MAN: all would be saved if we found a man. See here 'a nation, powerful, the Queen of Nations; but what 'is the good? a Man is wanting.

'Eh bien! A Man would not save us; we want 'MEN. Let a man come—he will, perhaps—let an 'administrator, a statesman, a financier come; let a 'general come to put an end to the state of disorder: 'we should neither be cured nor restored by that. Who 'knows even whether this momentary respite would not 'restore in full force our vanity by closing the wound it 'has received from our defeats?'

The 'Man' so loudly called for has indeed come in the person of the principal author of that ill-starred vain-gloriousness which caused the disasters. But M. Thiers contents himself with maintaining a provisional government and an exploded fiscal policy, while dreaming of a restoration of French influence abroad, and forgetting the cancer which consumes her vitals at home. It is not the day of giants in France, but possibly the task of restoring France would exceed a giant's powers. Were there two parties dividing the nation, and bent upon civil war, it would be nothing new, nothing which has not been successfully contended with before. But the two great divisions of Monarchists and Republicans comprehend within their ranks sections as utterly irreconcilable as the two main divisions. The Monarchists, as the more conservative party, may not outwardly appear so virulent

* The Count de Gasparin.

in their schisms, but it is clear that the feud between Imperialists, Orleanists, and Legitimists, must be irreconcilable. The Republican ranks again contain friends of order who believe in a 'Conservative Republic,' and 'Reds,' who only desire to renew the orgies of the Paris Commune. It is not a nation divided upon political questions, but it is class divided against class. The urban population hate and despise the rural, as ignorant and priest-led. The 'rurals' hate and dread the urban population as infidels—socialists dangerous to all proprietors, large or small. A deadly feud exists between the Liberal Republicans and the priests with their followers, principally the peasantry of the least enlightened districts. That strife must be internecine, for, on the one hand, the Liberals know that under universal suffrage the ignorant peasantry have a majority of votes, and if they obey the priests, will crush every attempt at political progress and Liberal Republicanism. The priests, on the other hand, well know that the Liberals, and still more the revolutionary sections of Communists and Socialists, detest their persons and office, and all that they venerate. A French priest is, in spite of himself, the political adviser of the ignorant peasant who consults him as to which candidate should be supported, and he is, of course, warned against the Liberal. Each election, therefore, embitters the feud, and where is it to end in a country where the majority of the educated not only disbelieve but despise the State religion and its priests?

A further feud exists between the capitalists, including the master-manufacturers, the contractors, the shopkeepers, on the one side, and the proletarian on the other. In Paris the late events intensified this ill-will, and there is an anticipation too likely to verify itself—that in another Communist rising the bourgeoisie might be the victims. Though there is nothing strange in this hostile feeling on the part of the poor towards the

rich, which unhappily exists in other countries, there are special causes giving it peculiar venom in France, where the proletarians of Paris consider themselves to have been the victims of the bourgeoisie in the terrible retribution of Satory and elsewhere.

Still more dangerous than these class-feuds are the vindictive feelings of the lower orders in Paris and other places towards the army. That army, once the pride and idol of Frenchmen, is now looked upon by many with as much animosity as any German soldiers. On various occasions officers and soldiers have been abused and insulted by the populace, and such insults are probably reciprocated. The fact that the only triumphs of the French army were gained over their countrymen, and that soldiers are still made the executioners of the Communist convicts, adds to the ill-will, and it may be doubted whether at this moment a defeat of the French army by a foreign foe would not be regarded with satisfaction by many Frenchmen. This is an entirely new feature in French revolutions, which have not heretofore made the army unpopular, and a feature which renders the too numerous chronicles of past destructions and restorations no guide for the future.

It is, of course, a very serious and alarming fact that the numerous disaffected body which thus looks with vindictive animosity upon the Government, the middle class, and the army, is not an external enemy to be kept at a distance, but a foe in possession of the metropolis, and watching his opportunity. There are also considerations peculiar to France, and resulting from the 'Immortal 'Revolution' of 1789, which aggravate the danger. The precedent of confiscation then set, benefited the peasantry, who got possession of the land, but the urban population did not even get their houses or their garrets. They probably think this unfair; they may look to another glorious revolution to redress the balance, and, so far as the oppor-

tunity for vengeance, there are bad precedents of later date.

Still this *guerre sourde* of classes may not be so dangerous in reality as it appears in English eyes, but for the present the 'Fraternity' of the Republic is, as a French wit said, the fraternity of Cain and Abel, and the 'Equality' perhaps 'an equality in misfortune.'

On the political state of France it would be unwise for an Englishman to speculate, when it is confessedly in a state of transition, and even Frenchmen do not pretend to see what will follow. 'Everything is possible,' it has been said—Republic, Empire, Legitimate or Parliamentary Monarchy, or a military dictatorship. It seems strange indeed that where a Republic is possible personal government should be almost equally so—but such is the opinion of well-informed Frenchmen.

It is even said that a new Plébiscite would restore the Empire by the votes of the peasantry. If this be true, it proves how greatly education is needed among the masses, and how little necessary connection there is between universal suffrage and liberty.

But for their ignorance it is inconceivable that the masses could be under the delusions of Napoleonism after such bitter and humiliating experience of its results. If Frenchmen are to acquire any political education, the first step is to get rid of the magniloquent phrases which inflate their vanity, mislead them as to the past, and make the teachings of history utterly useless. But for the untrue and undeserved praises heaped upon the First Empire by M. Thiers, the Second would have been impossible. All good Frenchmen should seek to banish such phrases as 'immortal glory,' 'the soldiers whose valour 'had subjugated all Europe,' or, worse still, 'the universe.' All are false, and all are ridiculous and misleading. French 'immortal glory,'—where is it to-day? The French soldiers, led by the greatest military genius of modern

times, fought very well, as they always do, but they neither conquered the universe (which is larger than bombastic writers fancy) nor this little planet, nor even Europe.

What Napoleon really did towards 'conquering the world' was this:—He led an army into Africa, leaving it there to be defeated and to capitulate. He made a very short raid into Asia, to be repulsed from before Acre, and to stain the honour of the French arms by the murder of 1,500 or 2,000 prisoners at El Arisch. Beyond this his extra-European exploits were losing all the French colonies and nearly all the navy.

In Europe, which is larger also than many Frenchmen suppose, he did not conquer Russia, nor Scandinavia, nor Turkey (nor England, included in Europe by most geographers)—that is to say, countries forming more than half of that continent. He did conquer Germany, then weak and divided. He conquered Austria and her Italian provinces; the other Italian States did not wait to be conquered, and there was little credit in overrunning, still less in plundering * them.

Napoleon did not conquer Spain, though he perfidiously and fraudulently introduced his troops as allies, and disgraced the French flag by treacherously occupying Spanish fortresses under false pretences. But the French armies (one of which capitulated at Baylen and another at Cintra) were defeated and expelled from the Peninsula, where France gained little honour, considering the unparalleled perfidy by which the Spanish court was decoyed into France, and the French forces smuggled into the Spanish strongholds.

* M. Lanfrey, who writes history in an honest spirit, tells us of the shameful contributions levied by General Bonaparte upon the North Italian States he professed to liberate! M. Thiers touches very tenderly on that point, and most French historians suppress it. But it was a stain upon the civilization of France that the galleries and museums of weak, and sometimes friendly States, should be plundered.

The wicked folly of the Russian war of 1812 was even more fatal, and ended, as all the world knows, in leaving the *Grande Armée* to perish or surrender, while its leader escaped to prepare further losses and humiliations for France.

Thus (truly) summarised, the 'immortal' deeds of the First Empire—even omitting the two subjugations of France—do not amount to universal conquests, nor to a career of unchequered victory. They by no means bear out the assertion of M. Thiers, that the victories of Napoleon I. were not due to his exceptional abilities and genius, but to the inherent superiority of the French. No doubt, by dwelling on the picturesque and striking side of the history, and by throwing meannesses, treacheries, and failures into the shade, it is possible to make a brilliant epic out of the Consulate and Empire as Thiers has done. But in sober truth the fact is, that, led by the best leader of his day, France did what many nations inferior to her in military capacity have done before. She beat troops less well-commanded, and, following up her blows, overran the countries of her enemies. Napoleon I., moreover, having suppressed every will but his own, had an unlimited supply of conscripts to supply his wars.

There are few nations which have not had their run of victory in ancient or modern times, when Providence has sent a great leader. If such a leader has, like Napoleon, absolute power over the persons and property of his subjects, it is rather a question of population and natural resources than of the higher military virtues. Thus the Egyptians of old were not a very warlike people, but under Sesostris they, in French phrase, conquered the universe—a larger universe than Napoleon ever did. The conquests of Alexander must have quadrupled those of Napoleon in extent, and probably in the physical difficulties overcome, yet the Macedonians had

but lately emerged from obscure barbarism. The Carthaginians were not so military a nation as the Romans, and yet, under Hannibal, they defeated the Roman armies, and but for the prudence of Fabius, and possibly the happy audacity of Claudius Nero, at the battle of the Metaurus, would have taken Rome, and probably changed the world's history. Attila, with his barbarians, conquered an incomparably greater extent of territory than Napoleon, so did Tamerlane, Mahomet II.; and many others in former times, though their soldiers were not necessarily superior to those they vanquished. In modern times Spain has had her great commanders and days of supremacy. Under Gustavus Adolphus Sweden, with her insignificant population, changed the fate of Europe. It is hardly allowable, perhaps, to mention England, which, as M. Thiers politely reminded Mr. Gladstone, was pronounced by Napoleon no Power at all, except by sea. M. Thiers forgot that Napoleon himself must have changed his opinion, as he fled without even the wreck of an army from a Belgian battle-field. A century before Marlborough had shown what even web-footed Englishmen can do when led by genius. Many nations besides France have had their eras of victory. Few (if any) having attained to supremacy and lost their position, have ever recovered it. The exceptional genius and successes of Napoleon are facts of history—the inferences drawn from them as to the inherent superiority of Frenchmen are pure delusions. If French history tells of great victories it tells of no less humiliating defeats with which Frenchmen would do well to acquaint themselves. Five French monarchs have been defeated and made prisoners, two of them to die captives. Few great armies perhaps were ever defeated by such disproportionately small forces as the French have been at Crecy, Poictiers, Agincourt, Rosbach; few countries so utterly prostrated after a battle or campaign.

It is a French delusion to imagine the resistance opposed by Napoleon in 1814–15 to the allies to have been unexampled. Frederick the Great in the Seven Years' War resisted a coalition proportionately far stronger, but resisted *successfully*. Attacked from the north by Sweden, the east by Russia, south by Austria, west by France, he made head against all, and, defeated in some places, snatched brilliant victories in others, and concluded an honourable peace.

Thus history, as known to all other nations, does not really supply any material to French Chauvinism; it shows France the equal in war, not the superior of her neighbours, and, if the late war imprints this lesson on the French mind, it will, in the long run, be her gain, not her loss. The future of France may be said to depend upon the extinction or revival of Chauvinism; just now Imperialism is discredited; France has dismissed Napoleon, but she has installed the high-priest of the Napoleonic worship. Yet if, after her late disastrous lessons, she secretly cherishes the delusions of the Napoleonic Legend, and should again rush into aggressive war, Germany would be entitled to treat her as a dangerous lunatic, and permanently to occupy her fortresses.

There are pauses—breathing times—in the lives of nations as of individuals, when they seem called upon to reflect upon the past and reconsider their principles of action. The present is such a time for France, and there are French writers whose just reflections on recent events would lead one to augur well for the future of their country. But there are others as insanely Chauvinistic and vainglorious as before the war, and these, unhappily, are the popular leaders, the men of action, who ought to be the most practical. No one expects Victor Hugo, notwithstanding his genius and his fame, when he rhapsodises about France, to be reasonable;

but M. Gambetta has governed the country, not without ability, and many think may govern it again. From him we might expect something better than a tissue of vain-glorious boasts utterly devoid of truth. Yet in one of his latest public speeches he thus addresses presumably grown-up men, who might be supposed to know something of what happened in their own lifetime:—

'She is the greatest and noblest thing in the world. 'She is not only an ardent, generous, and valiant nation, 'but she has in the enumeration of her qualities a 'quality which no other people possesses. She has the 'sentiment and passion of general justice throughout 'the world. Yes, it is at the same time her advantage 'and the rock upon which she splits, that she is dis-'interested, and so devoted to the worship of justice 'that her generous and glorious history is made up of 'sacrifices and immolations in the service of others. '(Profound sensation—on the part of the Savoyards.) 'Why? Because she is *not* egotistical, nor cunning, '*nor a conquering nation* in the miserable and brutal 'sense of the word; it is, on the contrary, because she 'has given everything to every one, because she has 'understood right and liberty as being the patrimony of 'all the world.' After dwelling on the duties of France, to wit the liberation of the human race, M. Gambetta added: 'This is the mission of France! Ah! yes, her 'star is obscured, and fortune has betrayed her. You 'remember the tragic efforts of that desperate struggle 'when the cowardly and ignoble Empire left us shame 'as a legacy. We were obliged to pick up the broken 'sword which alone remained, and to fight against those 'who lied, because, having declared war against the 'adventurer Cæsar, they continued it against a people 'who demanded peace.'

M. Gambetta was so audaciously disregardful of known truths as to address such language to the Savoyards,

whose country was 'annexed' to France a few years ago, as the wages of a war declared to be made 'for an 'idea,' and proved to be for the very common idea of gain. No wonder that 'profound sensation on the part 'of the Savoyards' was noticeable! But after M. Gambetta had said that France was 'not a conquering 'country,' ignoring her whole history, any other perversions of fact might pass unnoticed.

The bad elements of vainglory and untruthfulness still survive therefore, not, as they probably do elsewhere, in the shade, but courting the full blaze of publicity. We have our own faults in England; but can any one imagine a Parliamentary candidate, not a fool, addressing such language even to a crowd of rustics, and his audience not resenting such claptrap and falsehood? Would any Englishman deny the national crime of the slave trade? Yet we freed our slaves in cold blood twenty years before France did as much in a revolutionary fever-fit.

From many such indications, and in accordance with the opinions of eminent Frenchmen, we may conclude that disregard of truth, and that incorrigible conceit which excludes the suspicion even of a defect in the French character, are still the bane of France.

Excepting, of course, the 'incorrigibles' of the Chauvinist school, and the Imperialists, who see nothing wrong except the substitution of another *régime* for that of the Empire, all the best public writers in France admit the need of a national reform, though differing as to its nature. Royalists, Republicans, Conservatives, and Liberals have thus made the first step towards improvement.

Ernest Renan, in his *Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale*, looks, as the title implies, to a better education, mental and moral, as the true remedy. Unquestionably, better education would remove many evils, but its effects would

be felt in the next generation, not the present. M. Renan considers also that representative government is required for France, and would have a constitutional monarchy (the old stock of the Capetian kings by preference). Democracy * he regards as devoid of high motives, prone to selfishness and devotion to material interests, and peculiarly ill-suited to France. Universal suffrage † he considers as the very worst kind of election, certain to produce nothing but mediocrity. 'It would 'be contrary to nature that an intellectual standard, 'which barely equals that of a narrow-minded ignorant 'man, should elect an enlightened, strong, and brilliant 'governing body. From such a form of election, from 'such an ill-conceived democracy, what could result but 'the complete degradation of the national mind?' 'The grand electoral college formed of the whole people 'is inferior to the most commonplace sovereign of 'former times; the Court of Versailles was preferable 'to the universal suffrage of our days for the choice of 'public officers; such a form of suffrage will produce 'a worse government than that of the eighteenth century 'in its worst days.' As the deliberate conviction of one of the most eminent writers in France, and one who had seen the experiment tried, this opinion may be useful even in England, where universal suffrage has its advocates. Republicanism finds no more favour in M. Renan's eyes. 'The very name of Republic is 'provocative of a certain unhealthy democratic develop-'ment;' ‡ but he desires to see hereditary monarchy based upon 'historical' instead of 'Divine right,' § with a parliament and hereditary aristocracy. To the latter he attaches much value, in a military sense, and thinks that without it France must remain inferior to Prussia. It is to be remembered, as giving force to these opinions,

* Pages 7, 18.
† Pages 45-6-7.
‡ Page 69.
§ Page 71.

that M. Renan is a *Liberal*,* and, as he boasts himself, the pupil of Germany.

In tracing the degeneracy, social and political, of France, M. Renan goes back to the revolution of 1789 as the first great step towards the 'debasement' of 1870. 'When France cut off the head of her king 'she committed suicide.' The Capetian kings had built up the kingdom in 800 years; they were the national bond and centre which could not be dispensed with. The revolution took a wrong course when it followed the theories of Rousseau instead of the practical example of England. The revolution of 1830, though justified by the folly of the King, should not have been carried further than compelling him to withdraw the Ordonnances, or, in any case, accepting the successor he nominated. In 1848 the King and his sons weakly yielded to a Parisian émeute, † which violently outraged the wishes of the nation. 'A dynasty owes it to the 'nation always assumed to support it, to resist a tur-'bulent minority. The folly of the men of 1848 was 'without a parallel. They gave France what she never 'asked for—universal suffrage.' At this epoch, M. Cousin, addressing M. Renan, said, 'My friend, people don't 'understand yet what a crime was the revolution of 'February (1848). The last act of that revolution will, 'perhaps, be the dismemberment of France.' Have we seen the last? it may well be asked. Of the subsequent seizure of power by Louis Napoleon, and the Second Empire, M. Renan speaks in the same terms of condemnation as nearly all French writers; but he seems to blame the Emperor too much and the people too little for the rupture of 1870. He seems also to think that the material prosperity enjoyed under the Empire was a loss rather than a gain, as demoralizing the people and unfitting them for war; but when he condemns them

* Page 98. † Page 14.

for turning against their sovereign in the moment of his discomfiture, that writer will find many Englishmen to agree with him. Contrasting the cases of King John, Charles VII., Francis I., and even Louis XIV., 'who 'passed through as critical circumstances as Napoleon 'III.,' he infers that 'a country torn by revolutions, and 'which has dynastic divisions, is incapable of a great 'military effort,'* which Napoleon III. should have known. *He* could not survive defeat, though Frederic William III. was never firmer on his throne than after Jena.

The general result of M. Renan's reflections upon the causes and nature of what he terms the moral corruption of France under the Second Empire may be summed up thus:—Democracy, operating through universal suffrage, has lowered the moral worth of the people, and given them inferior men in the various departments of the Government, civil and military. Material prosperity also has contributed to lessen public spirit, and cherish a base selfishness. Universal suffrage,† which has caused the evil, cannot ever apply the remedy. Ignorance and vanity, and the misleading lessons of the Roman Catholic party as to the supposed decadence of Protestant nations,‡ with the silly rodomontades of the newspapers and the silly clamour of the Paris gamins, precipitated the crisis, which is thus described:—

'To discover of late years that the moral condition 'of France was seriously affected, required some pene-'tration§ and a certain habit of political and historical 'investigation. To discover the evils of to-day, alas! 'it is only necessary to have eyes. The whole fabric 'of our chimerical imagination has sunk down like the 'fairy castles of our dreams. Presumption, childish 'vanity, insubordination, want of seriousness, applica-'tion, and honesty, feebleness of mind, incapacity to

* Does history, above all, French history, bear out this dictum?

† Pages 45, 48, 67. ‡ Page 24. § Pages 2, 3, 4.

'entertain more than one idea at a time, want of 'scientific intellect, childish and gross ignorance—such 'is the summary of our last year's history. That 'army, so proud and so pretentious, has not achieved 'one single success; those statesmen, so sure of their 'ground, have found themselves children; that in-'fatuated Ministry has been convicted of incapacity; 'that public instruction, so opposed to all progress, is 'convicted of allowing the intellect of France to sink 'into nullity; that Catholic clergy, which preached so 'loudly the inferiority of Protestant nations, has stood 'the afflicted spectator of the ruin it had partly caused; 'that dynasty, which seemed so deeply rooted in the 'country, had not on the 4th September one single 'defender; that opposition, which pretended to have 'remedies for every evil in its revolutionary receipts, 'found itself in a few days as unpopular as the fallen 'dynasty; that Republican party, full of those sad 'errors which have been circulated for half a century 'upon the history of the Revolution, thought itself able 'to repeat a game which succeeded eighty years since, 'only through a train of circumstances totally different 'from those of to-day. It also found itself deluded, 'like one mistaking his dreams for realities. All has 'melted away like a vision of the Apocalypse—even the 'very legends have been stricken with death: that of 'the Empire has been destroyed by Napoleon III.; that 'of 1792 has received its death-blow from M. Gambetta; 'that of the Reign of Terror (for the Terror also had 'its legend among us) has had its hideous parody in 'the Commune; that of Louis XIV. will never more be 'what it was before, since the day when the descendant 'of the Elector of Brandenburg restored the Empire of 'Charlemagne in the Salle des Fêtes at Versailles. 'Bossuet alone is found to have been prophetic when 'he said, "And now, O ye kings! understand."'

Such is the picture painted by a French master, of the nation which most Frenchmen, and, strange to say, not a few Englishmen,* think ought to lead and overrule the European continent. Are 'presumption, childish 'vanity, insubordination, triviality, gross ignorance, want 'of seriousness and honesty in the people, childish inca-'pacity in the statesmen, utter ineptitude in the officials, 'civil and military, failures everywhere,' the characteristics of a nation called by nature to the supremacy of Europe? At all events, M. Renan does not think so. He clings, indeed, to the hope of a France 'intellectually and morally 'reformed' (totally transformed?) resuming that position, but he discourages all such pretensions for the present.

When, from describing the present evils of France and tracing their causes, that writer proceeds to suggest remedies, he must obtain the concurrence of all who love France without disregarding the welfare of Europe. M. Renan would have Frenchmen to *fit themselves* for the leading part they desire to play by a higher moral and intellectual education, and, in the meanwhile, would have them forego ambition. 'Let us be humble; above 'all, let us distrust presumption. Prussia devoted 'sixty-three years to avenge Jena; let us devote at least 'twenty to avenge ourselves for Sedan. During ten or 'fifteen years let us withdraw from the politics of the 'world, and confine ourselves to the humble labours of 'internal reform. On no account let us run into revo-'lutions; let us cease to believe that it is our privilege 'to lead Europe; let us renounce a position that makes 'us an exception to the general law. By such means 'it is incontestable that—the ordinary chances of this 'world helping us—in fifteen or twenty years we shall

* Englishmen considerately exempt their own country, however, from the felicity of such a domination, but they might at least allow those nations which have more experience of it, and are more interested in the question, to decide.

'have recovered our rank. We shall not recover it by 'other means.'

Whether the French author is right in his anticipations of the results or not, the means recommended for repairing the shattered fortunes of his country must command our approval. We may not approve the *arrière pensée* of revenge which peeps out, but his advice is good in the same sense as the father's in the fable, when he counselled his sons to dig for the concealed treasure buried in his garden. Though the treasure was never found, the deep digging paid as well; and in the same way, twenty years of *real* peace—peace, not made as burdensome as war by huge armaments—peace, not threatened every moment by an ambitious and aggressive foreign policy—might make France the richest, the most prosperous, and happiest of nations. It sounds paradoxical, yet a peaceful France might be even a danger to Europe, so rapidly would the resources of the country develop and increase. Yet, even in the writings of a man so philosophically impartial as M. Renan, one sees grounds to despair of a pacific France. M. Renan says, 'Those 'who have preached the doctrine of natural frontiers'—that is to say, M. Thiers and the whole of Napoleonic France, with men like Prevost-Paradol, not Imperialists at all—'have no right to complain that others do to them 'what they wished to do to others.' And yet after this avowal that France met her deserts, M. Renan apparently thinks that she ought to prepare to retake the two German provinces of Elsass and Lothringen, which she has lost. Germany, again, could not do less (if her 'honour' be 'of the same kind and quality' as her neighbour's), and so, taking and re-taking must go on *ad infinitum*.

Turning from M. Renan's opinions on the causes and remedies of national decline in France to another French writer, M. le Comte A. de Gasparin, we find him arrive at somewhat similar conclusions from a very different

27429

standpoint. M. Renan is, as every one knows, latitudinarian in religion and liberal, yet not democratic. Count Gasparin is an earnest and thorough-going Calvinist Huguenot. Both, however, agree that ignorance and presumption lie near the root of the evil they deplore, and both agree that the Roman Catholic clergy of France are in a great degree responsible for the national ignorance. While M. Renan, however, traces the ills of France chiefly to a political cause—'democracy ill-'understood'*—M. de Gasparin looks to deeper moral causes, and contends that France has been demoralized in the first place by a religion which he considers untrue and pernicious. He denies that the present evils of France are due to the war.† 'Helplessness exists before 'it shows itself, the malady exists before the symptoms, 'the cause of defeat before the defeat itself. One felt 'all this coming; the vital forces were abating, life was 'ebbing, the incapacity for liberty increased. One felt the 'approach of that general indisposition which surprised 'the unthinking. We had no allies, no friends, every 'one stood aloof from us. The Empire, with its pre-'tensions, its tender points, and the fever of insecurity 'which it loved to inspire, irritated the nerves of all the 'world. Further, to complete our unpopularity, there 'was the revolutionary spirit always at hand.

'All intellectual movement was arrested. Ask the 'booksellers, and they will tell you what vile works still 'found a few readers. Or skim over the *feuilletons* of 'the papers in fashion! ..

'Our great theatrical successes were *La belle Hélène,* 'or *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein.* Every one knows 'what it was that people went to the *cafés chantants* 'to hear.

'Our schools and colleges remained at the standard 'of the Ignorantine friars. Our course of study, unable

* P. 43. † *La France, nos Fautes, nos Périls, notre Avenir,* pp. 1, 2, 3.

'to get out of the old groove, and deprived of the 'breath of liberty, dwindled away miserably.

'Meanwhile, a vile luxury blossomed in the sunshine; 'it might well be called the days of the Benoiton! 'That *Bois de Boulogne* which has just been cut down, 'has it not witnessed such a display of vice as we might 'seek in vain in any other country? . . . . During 'the siege of Paris its defenders danced immodest 'dances outside the walls and in sight of the German 'armies, and on the morning after their evacuation of 'Paris the playbills announced the continuance of '*Frou Frou!*'

In such indignant terms does Count Gasparin denounce the national decline under the Empire. Not less indignantly does he sweep away every false excuse made for the war in its inception and continuance, and every pretext for complaining of its legitimate consequences.* He confutes the charge of unusual harshness or cruelty in the German soldiery, and denies that France could disclaim complicity with the fallen Empire. The dethronement of Napoleon III. he views, as in truth, the act of Germany rather than France, and consequently not admissible as a plea against just retribution for his acts. He might have added that France would have idolized and not dethroned the author of a *successful* aggression. In a manly and unanswerable strain of argument he sweeps away the whole 'refuge of lies' with which it has been sought to disfigure the facts of an indefensible aggression. France would do well to con-

* Count Gasparin, however, while denying that France, defeated in a war intended to despoil Germany of her Rhenish provinces, can complain of being treated as she would have treated her foe, contends that Alsace should have been neutralized and not annexed. The objection to this plan of neutralizing an intermediate territory is to be found in M. Thiers' *History*, where he justifies the habitual disregard of neutral rights by Napoleon I. It is also difficult to conceive that France would abstain from re-annexing her lost provinces if the inhabitants desired it.

sider his chapters on these points, and a distinguished English statesman might learn something from the generous defence of the King of Prussia's religion by an enemy who can be just to a foe.

To the false idea of glory, to the want of truthfulness and justice so conspicuous in the personal character of Napoleon I., and in the whole spirit of the First Empire, Count Gasparin attributes the want of truth, which he regards as characteristic of modern France. In his first chapter on Patriotism and Morals,* 'National honour' (the true idea of), 'like true patriotism, has been 'misconceived. . . . . I have heard of another kind of 'honour—that which requires that a nation should be 'honourable, that whose jealous eye repels all that is 'unworthy. I deceived myself. The honour that is 'in question may be found in the articles of the '*Moniteur* of the First Empire and the correspondence 'of Napoleon I. To slander impudently, to publish 'official falsehoods, despise the independence of other 'nations, break the promises made; to reproach King 'Louis and King Joseph with their respect for the 'financial engagements they have taken, and sneer at 'their sympathy with the people they had sworn to 'govern well: to shoot the Turkish prisoners at St. 'Jean d'Acre' (El Arisch), 'to shoot everywhere, in 'numbers and in cold blood, to make examples; to 'trample on all resistance, to bruise and crush the 'individual, such is the summary. The only essential 'matter is "glory;" glory is the first and last word of 'the human understanding. Subordinate to that let 'every one bow to the earth in presence of power, let 'the rule of the camp overbear the magistrate, the 'clergy, all citizens, all morality; let all idea of con-'science and liberty be effaced; let the national genius 'be extinguished, let intellect become barren, what does

* Vol. i. pp. 19, 20.

'it matter? numbers of standards have been placed in 'the Invalides, the gates of many capitals have been 'forced, many independent nationalities have been des- 'troyed; there is glory, therefore there must be honour!

'Glory, honour, patriotism of this new kind mock 'the people, and those professing those virtues emulate 'each other in deceiving them. The people must not 'know the truth, the nation must not meddle with its 'own affairs. Singular maxims for the days of universal 'suffrage!

'Reflect upon the late events. No truth in the 'manifesto of M. de Gramont. No truth in the declara- 'tion of war; during the campaign no truth; after our 'disasters no truth. We have been treated like ill- 'educated children, not like men. Men are told the 'truth, which, far from weakening, strengthens them; 'it is a manly system which awakens all the energies 'of our nature. It is certain that the five months of 'lies which we have had to submit to have enervated 'our resistance and compromised the national daring.'*

As a fact, the French people ceased to believe the official and unofficial reports which came from their own

* M. Gasparin, on the subject of the popular French abuse of V. Bismarck, says,—'Don't let us make an angel of M. de Bismarck, 'nor yet a demon. Let us remember the *Moniteur* of the First Empire, 'and read its models of indignant eloquence on the "perfidies," the '"falsehoods, the accumulated crimes of Pitt, the minister of infamous '"Albion." No monster could compare to him; war only existed by his 'faults; without him Napoleon, no doubt, would have given us perpetual 'peace! And France at last believed all that! We now want a most 'perverse Bismarck, as the First Empire needed an execrable Pitt. This 'always serves the purpose at the cost only of throwing those exertions 'of the fancy into the waste-paper basket, when they have fulfilled their 'objects. . . . . Whatever the perverseness of M. de Bismarck may be, 'one thing is certain: we demanded a prey, we were refused, and we 'proceeded to seize it. That there was a Mephistopheles in the trans- 'action is possible, but that our Government was as innocent as Margaret 'is doubtful.'

side, and only expected the truth from their enemies, or from the correspondence of the English press; and even the French officers in many cases are believed to have broken their parole! Assuredly, this would never have happened before the time of the Revolution and the First Empire.*

That the Second Empire completed the national demoralization which the First began, is the theory which the best French authorities adopt, and there is no difficulty in understanding why it should be so. Under each Empire truth was proscribed; and after the First Empire had actually passed away, a legendary Empire, a fiction of French vanity, was invented, which opened the way for the Second Empire. As the part of the French people, other than the soldiery, under the First Empire was little in accordance with any legitimate idea of a 'Great Nation,' and as the desertion of Napoleon I. by his subjects as soon as they dared to desert him was not quite magnanimous, a theory had to be invented, and it was difficult. The difficulty was this. France had boasted much of liberty and her efforts to propagate it, but when her absolute master felt himself in the saddle, he gave his subjects liberty to hold their tongues and obey his orders; but for the rest, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were words no longer to be uttered. For fifteen years the iron rule of Napoleon I. suppressed every will but his own. When he fell, he was cursed as a tyrant, and deserted by all with a few honourable exceptions. But when he had been rehabilitated by Beranger and his school, and still more by Thiers, the dilemma

* The article in the *Edinburgh Review*, attributed to Mr. Gladstone, quotes 'a captured letter of an officer of MacMahon's army, dated 'August 26:' 'Partout on pille et on vole, même dans les maisons; les 'villages où nous avons passé sont plus désastrés qu'ils ne le seraient 'par les Prussiens. On se vole aussi dans l'armée, *même entre officiers*: 'c'est une demoralisation abominable.'

arose: 'If he was a tyrant, then the French people had 'been his slaves; but if the "Martyr of St. Helena" * 'was all that his friends asserted, why did the French 'people desert him?' The problem admits of no satisfactory solution, but the alleged case of a defendant in an English court seems to have suggested an expedient. 'No defence—abuse the plaintiff's attorney.' England was the plaintiff's attorney, and the whole French press for many years abused England as the evil spirit who resisted the upright, honourable, and disinterested efforts of the 'martyr' to benefit mankind. As the abuse was founded entirely upon fictions of French writers, the habit of disregarding truth gained ground in France, and the evil culminated during the late war. M. Lemoinne says of this habit: 'The first cause of France's mis-'fortune has been falsehood; not only have we been lied 'to, but we have lied to ourselves.' He also connects the two Empires with the demoralization of France, and can thus speak of M. Thiers' Golden Age, when truth at all events did not flourish: 'Prince Napoleon is a 'conspirator in spite of himself. He wished to be Liberal, 'but he could not be; the baleful blood of his race 'revolted against it. He wished to be President of the 'Republic and to become so honestly, and he could not; 'the fatal current of his name and history would irre-'sistibly impel him to the 18th Brumaires and 2nd 'Decembers. Prince Napoleon says that his sole crime 'is the name he bears. Yes, that is so; it is his name 'which constitutes his crime, because in itself and by 'itself that name is a crime—a crime against justice, 'against right, against public morality, against sworn 'faith, against oaths twenty times renewed; a crime 'against the country upon which that name has never 'failed to entail invasion, dismemberment, and ruin; a 'crime against humanity, which has yielded seas of

* What a long chapter of lies does that phrase import!

'blood for the two Empires; and finally a crime against 'Liberty, whom the Napoleons have never embraced 'but to violate and slay after having dishonoured her.'

The most distinguished of the French prelates, M. Dupanloup, laments the decay of truthfulness in France. 'We had almost ceased to speak the truth. . . . 'Truth was banished in almost every rank by extravagant 'luxury, and driven from almost every hearth.'

MM. Erckmann-Chatrian — at the opposite pole, morally and politically—would divide the blame of demoralizing the people by lies between the Empire and the clergy. In one of those admirable touches of nature by which he portrays any class of Frenchmen, he makes a woman, who sees the Prussian soldiers passing through the village, exclaim, 'Mon Dieu! we never believed 'there were so many heretics in the world!' and thereupon the supposed narrator remarks: 'See what igno- 'rance was maintained from father to son among these 'people by making them believe that they stood alone in 'the world; that we were a thousand to one, and that 'our religion was universal. In short, pure nonsense 'backed by lying.'

Whether, as some French authorities believe, the disregard of truth is connected with the teaching of the Roman Catholic clergy, or whether, as to some extent is certain, it is a tradition of the First Empire, or a joint product of both causes, it is a very lamentable fact, and more than any other is interwoven with the future of France. With the whole political edifice to build from the ground, and the shattered social relations to repair; with no national faith in any form of government; with little belief in religion, and each fond tradition discredited, what remains to build on if the love of truth be lost? When the Hebrew prophets lament the ruin, political, moral, and material, of their nation, they seem to reach the climax of its desolation in saying, '*Truth*

'is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter.' An Englishman may conceive many misfortunes to befal his country; but if he could conceive truth, as Bishop Dupanloup says, to be 'driven from almost every hearth,' he would regard it as the dissolution of society and the death of the nation.

That society, if not dissolved, is held together by feeble bonds, that government exists only on a provisional arrangement in France, is only too clear. That France may arise from her present abasement, purified by suffering, humbler, wiser, happier, and more stable, must be the wish of all Englishmen. Whether she will do so, and at what time, is beyond human foresight; but with a nation in a transitional state, where every form of home and foreign policy is possible, any safe alliance is clearly not so. To some Englishmen all idea of relinquishing an alliance with another nation in the day of its distress is distasteful, but in truth no alliance in a definite sense exists.

Happily, France has by her own conduct released England from every shadow of a moral obligation, so far as the past is concerned. When the late French Government proposed a secret alliance against us as part of the Belgian treachery, it left us at full liberty (even secretly) to find a more faithful ally. Of any claims arising out of the history of the Anglo-French alliance, something will be said in another chapter. It will be seen that much of the time during which the Anglo-French alliance nominally united the two countries the feeling of the whole French people was bitterly hostile to England. Even the obvious interest of France did not prevent the Government playing false to her ally on many occasions, and the popular animosity to England was often used as an argument to obtain undue concessions from her. This animosity gradually decreased, it is true, under the Second Empire, and yet, though not on

the surface, it *manet altâ mente repostum*, and even in 1861 was in the minds of the masses—a deep traditional feeling.

Mr. Grant Duff says,* 'We believe that on the 'friendship of France and England depends the happi-'ness of our age; we believe that a war with France 'would do more to imperil the results of civilization 'and to retard its advances than almost anything that 'could be mentioned. We are ready to admit that, in 'all the negociations connected with the Commercial 'Treaty, the French Government behaved with the 'strictest honour and the greatest courtesy. We know 'that our friendly sentiments are reciprocated by many 'persons in all classes in France. We know that the 'Emperor himself reciprocates them, with certain reser-'vations; *but we know that the masses in France do not 'reciprocate them. We know that hatred of England is 'deeply rooted amongst the peasantry and in the army. 'We know that at any moment the scruples of the 'enlightened and the wishes of the Emperor himself 'would have to be disregarded if the popular voice 'called loudly for war with England.* And who shall 'say that, if England interfered with any of the wild 'schemes' (the Belgian plot, for instance) 'of ambi-'tion which possess so many minds in France, the 'popular voice would not do so?' Thus Mr. Grant Duff wrote in 1861 from his own personal knowledge of public men and affairs in France, and few men have studied foreign countries more conscientiously or with greater success. It was his custom to address his constituents (shrewd, well-educated Scots, probably) upon the topics—frequently the foreign questions—of the day, venturing upon the somewhat hazardous attempt of anticipating their issues. It is singular to see how often recent events have verified these previsions.

* Elgin *Speeches* by Mountstuart Grant Duff, M.P.

In turning from the state of fickle and volcanic France to that of solid and stable Germany, one is relieved from any fear lest a sudden change of scene should make the speculations of to-day inapplicable to to-morrow. Such as Germany is to-day she was essentially many years ago, and we may fairly believe she will be many years hence. Within the body politic, indeed, great changes have taken place, but changes which Germans long desired as necessary to their security (not at all to their 'glory'), and which they have lately seen the best reasons to rejoice at. Looking at Germany as a whole, it is not for Englishmen or other strangers to say in what relation its component parts shall stand to each other. If the Austro-Hungarian Empire was found to have other interests than those of the rest of Germany, it was a strictly German question whether Austro-Hungary should be detached from the German Empire or not. So of Hanover, or Hesse-Cassel, or Nassau, if their independent existence hindered the consolidation and the resulting security of the great German community, it was a question for Germans whether those countries should retain their autonomy or lose it. The princes who lost their territories may have been hardly dealt with—in fact, were so—but if their continued independence would, as is possible, have given France a footing in Germany, that is enough for Germans. Their first duty to themselves was to prevent invasions. The invasion of Denmark—the act of peaceful Austria as much as ambitious Prussia—aroused the generous anger of Englishmen; but indefensible as the aggression appears to us, the Germans regarded it strictly as a war for the liberation of their countrymen and the assertion of a constitutional right. It certainly did not originate in ambition or lust of territory in kings, but in a profound belief among the German people that their brethren in Schleswig-Holstein were deprived of their legal rights

by Denmark. In the issue, 'The War of the Pro-'fessors,' as it was called—learned professors of history and civil law having urged it—was turned to the profit of Prussia, and territory was retained which should have been surrendered, which should be restored even now or acquired by fair bargain. But even the Danish War cannot be cited as proof that the German people love war, or would make it, as France did, to seize upon coveted territory.

The restoration of the German Empire was, of course, as much the affair of the Germans as the restoration of the French Empire would be the affair of the French people, and yet we find English writers of weight and authority contesting its legality, and speaking of it as if it were a menace to the peace and independence of Europe.

Sir A. Malet (with a professional bias, perhaps, towards a confederation which gave employment to so many diplomatists) regarded the establishment of the German Empire as a portentous change, pregnant with danger.

He thinks* that the Germanic Confederation was a masterpiece of political skill, and its destruction a daring breach of the Treaty of Vienna. Yet, if Sir A. Malet were asked whether, in constructing a map of Europe *ab initio*, he would interpose a confederation of weak and discordant independent states between two great and aggressive powers (France and Russia), he would certainly say No. In 1815, the existing rights of petty sovereigns had to be considered, and thus, instead of a strong State where one was most wanted, a number of weak States were maintained.

'It should and will be noticed by the historian that 'these institutions were framed with a view to two 'objects—the maintenance of the internal tranquillity of

* *The Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation in* 1866.

'Germany and the holding France in check. . . .
'Both these objects were secured for half a century.'

That France would concur in this opinion is as certain as that Germany does not, and for the same reasons. The Germanic Confederation was like one of the Abbé Siéyès' many paper constitutions—an ingenious device, excellent in theory, and perfectly suited to times of political calm. After the Peace of 1815 all Europe needed repose, and obtained it. Why? Because, just as had happened a century before, France had been thoroughly beaten and humbled, the best means, apparently, of securing European tranquillity. But when France, in one of her recurrent revolutionary fevers, in 1848, had terminated this long calm, and involved Europe in political turmoil, the machinery of the Confederation was found not to work. The antagonism of Austria and Prussia revealed itself; the abortive Congress of Frankfort did not mend matters; and later, had not Frederic William been a most pacific monarch, the war of 1866 would have been anticipated by some years.

When the incidents of the Danish war brought Austrian and Prussian rivalry into action, it soon appeared that there could not be two heads to one body, however large that body might be. Prussia was the more resolute, having, perhaps, more definite political views. Austria (being technically right) tried to work the machinery of the Germanic Empire against Prussia, and Prussia, relying upon her military organization, overthrew Austria and the Confederated Empire at Sadowa. As a violence done to the German Confederation, the Germanic people have a right to complain of it, but they do not. For them the arrangements of 1815 had no particular sanctity, while the security of their territory was of primary importance. In the provisions of the Treaty of Vienna the dignity of the minor princes (some of them owing

their crowns to Napoleon) had to be considered, as well as the interests of their subjects, which were not necessarily identical. Many were 'mediatized,' but more remained than would have been desirable for the strength and solidity of German power.

It is a strong argument in favour of the suppression of the Confederation and the establishment of Prussian hegemony in 1866, that under her new organization Germany was able to repel the French aggression of 1870. It may be argued that the aggression had its origin in the jealousy with which that organization inspired France; but surely England does not subscribe to the doctrine that 'France has a vested interest 'in her neighbour's weakness.'

The views of the section of public opinion in England opposed to Germany and favourable to France are ably defended in the *Edinburgh Review* of April, 1871. That article, taking an historical view of the question, shows that the power of the old Holy Roman Empire was always unfavourable to liberty, and that the various States comprised in it always struggled against that power. But though this is true of 'THE *Empire*,' then all powerful and arousing the jealousy of Europe from its vast extent and its vague claims to universal supremacy, it can hardly be compared to the *new* German Empire, whose authority, except in war, is very limited.

The existence of superior power implies the possibility of danger arising from it if misused; but the choice for Germany lay between some recognised head at home, and weakness abroad. With the former, and the recent experiences of French aggression, it is no wonder that Germany decided upon that union which is strength. The creation of the Imperial dignity was not only in accordance with precedent, but was the natural form to give to authority over subordinate sovereigns. To prove

that the new Empire is altogether different from the old is nothing to the disadvantage of the new.

The Reviewer continues, p. 473—'Nor is the change 'matter of indifference to Europe. The Confederation 'of 1815 was essentially a defensive league. It is true 'that it could not have undertaken nor carried on an 'offensive war' (a virtual admission of weakness for any purpose), 'but we are entitled to assert that no 'foreign State ever ventured to attack it. The united 'forces of Austria and Prussia, with their minor con-'federates, constituted a power which effectually held 'France in check for fifty years. The Emperor 'Napoleon III. was known to have said that he could 'never attack them collectively. He defeated Austria 'singly; he thought himself (though most erroneously) 'in a condition to make war against Prussia. But as 'long as the Bund was in existence, backed by the 'Great Powers of Europe who had co-operated in cre-'ating it, and were deeply interested in its security for 'defensive purposes, the security of Germany was 'unassailable.'

It will strike the reader that the security of Germany implies the security of all its parts; and that if Napoleon III. was able to attack and vanquish Austria—a very important part—in 1859, without the Bund affording her any assistance, the fact militates against this theory. Of course France always preferred to attack one portion of Germany at a time rather than the whole; but as Prussia and the minor States gave no help to Austria in 1859, it is at least probable that had the Bund existed in 1870 it would have left Prussia to her fate. The Bund 'backed by the Great Powers of Europe' would of course have given ample security to Germany; but there is no certainty or even strong probability that such support would be forthcoming, and Germany had a right to absolute security.

The *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly* also give expression to that suspicion of Prussia which haunts the minds of many Englishmen, and which, looking back upon Prussian history, is not unreasonable. Her annals are marked by successive acquisitions of territory, made with little regard for the rights of others or the rules of morality; and even in the present century (during the great European war) no country, excepting France, violated international law more shamelessly. Even the humiliation of Jena, though the outrageous tyranny of Napoleon made Europe forget the previous conduct of Prussia, was not altogether undeserved. There is this difference, however, between the predatory history of Prussia and the more flagitious history of revolutionary and Napoleonic France: no Prussian historian, however patriotic, would describe the misdeeds of his country as 'sublime efforts of self-sacrifice,' as proving her 'passionate love of justice,' 'generous devotion to liberty,' or other innumerable virtues. Such language has constantly been applied by French writers to the revolutionary wars in which France impartially plundered* the countries she came to aid and those she came to attack—republics like Switzerland and Venice; sovereignties like Sardinia, Tuscany, or the Papal States. This distinction is important, because if we could imagine the Prussians to take the same Chauvinist view of the dark pages in their history which French writers do of parallel passages, there would be no hope for the peace of Europe. It is, however, precisely because the higher education, the more sober judgment,

*In 1798 the French Republican Government, without even the pretext of a war, sent an army to plunder the Federal treasury of *neutral* Switzerland at Berne; the booty stolen was less than expected. In Italy, besides the immense contributions in money and works of art levied upon friends who had been 'liberated,' the French generals enriched themselves without scruple, &c. See Lanfrey's *Hist. of Napoleon I.* General Bonaparte himself seems to have been an honourable exception.

and the love of truth prevailing in Germany makes this impossible, that there is no probability of the Emperor William copying Napoleon I. Even the unparalleled victories of the late war have not turned the heads of the educated Prussians, nor led them to forget self-respect and liberty in their admiration of successful generals. When Moltke—confessedly the first strategist of his day—Werder, and Manteuffel, fresh from their triumphs, presented themselves to the electors of Berlin, they were rejected. Their priceless services were admitted; but there may be higher considerations even than gratitude to individuals. So also may we trace the modest truthfulness and sobriety of the German character in the narratives of the late war. The successes obtained were so steadily consecutive, and wore so much the appearance of calculated results from combinations which never miscarried, that it was generally reported and believed that Von Moltke had prearranged the whole. The temptation to leave the world under that delusion did not, however, conquer the love of truth. The share of fortunate accidents in producing the desired results is freely admitted, and the unbroken chain of successes is confessed to have been much nearer to failure on some occasions than even the French themselves suspected. The contrast between Germany and France in this respect is enormous and instructive. Wars are too apt to beget wars; and it is very natural to think that a war not only successful in its military results—very barren advantages at times—but in more solid gain, should arouse the demon of aggression. But the worst moral effects of victory are most visible immediately afterwards, and as yet they have not developed themselves. Those who happened to be in Germany when the troops who had conquered France in six months were returning home, will remember the honest and simple joy, quite destitute of vainglorious-ness and fanfaronade, with which they were received.

Rustic arches of green boughs and flowers spanned the roads by which they were expected, and an unpretending inscription, 'To our home-returning Warriors,' or perhaps 'Soldiers,' with the well-merited addition of 'brave,' was the simple tribute of their civil fellow-countrymen. Of course the national flags were displayed; but the Tricolour, of which there could be no lack in Germany, was studiously kept out of sight. Dancing and music followed, of course, at night; but it was the welcome to the deserving citizen, not the triumph of the conqueror, that was celebrated. New words and names were not invented as records of victory: the Germans have neither 'Soup à la Metz,' 'Hash à la 'Sedan,' nor 'Consommé à la Paris.' We hear nothing of 'immortal glory,' 'heroic devotion,' or an 'admiring universe.' If there be so much modesty in the first moments of excusable elation, it promises well for the future. But the Germans are a serious, educated, religious people; and though there is a 'military caste,' as it has been called, in Prussia, who may love war, there are millions of Germans who love peace, and desire to spend their lives with their families, earning their bread by honest industry. Our German kinsmen share too much of our own blood to make it at all probable that they will, as a people, addict themselves to warfare. The qualities which mostly predispose a population to war are vanity, restlessness, love of licence, and idleness. These are not Teutonic defects; no one will accuse the Germans of having them, whatever other faults they may have.

There are not many Frenchmen capable of confessing the faults of their own country or recognising the virtues of a rival nation; but there was one officially charged with the task of telling the truth who had ability to discern and boldness to proclaim it. Thus he writes of Prussia and of France:—

'Again, looking at the moral condition of the contending countries, one cannot but admit that Prussia is not only the more cautious and the more vigilant of the two, but that her people are also the most highly educated and disciplined in the world. Who that has lived here (Berlin) will deny that the Prussians are patriotic, energetic, and teeming with youthful vigour; that they are not corrupted by sensual pleasures, but are manly, have earnest convictions, do not think it beneath them to reverence sincerely what is noble and lofty? What a melancholy contrast does France afford in all this! Having sneered at everything, she has lost the faculty of respecting anything. Virtue, family life, patriotism, honour, religion are represented to a frivolous generation as fitting subjects of ridicule. The theatres have become schools of shamelessness and obscenity. Drop by drop poison is instilled into the very core of an ignorant and enervated society, which has neither the insight nor the energy left to amend its institutions, nor, which would be the most necessary step to take, to become better informed or more moral. One after the other the fine qualities of the nation are dying out. Where is the generosity, the loyalty, the charm of our intellect, and our former elevation of soul? If this goes on, the time will come when this noble race of France will be known only by its faults. And France has no idea that while she is sinking, more earnest nations are stealing a march upon her, are distancing her on the road to progress, and are preparing for her a secondary position in the world. I should wish some enlightened and unprejudiced Frenchmen to come to Prussia and make this country their study. They would soon discover that they were living in the midst of a strong, earnest, and intelligent nation, entirely destitute, it is true, of all noble and delicate feelings, of all fascinating charms, but endowed with every solid virtue, and alike

'distinguished for untiring industry, order, and economy, 'as well as for patriotism, a strong sense of duty, and 'that consciousness of personal dignity which, in their 'case, is so happily blended with respect for authority 'and obedience to law.

'They would see a country with firm, sound, and 'moral institutions, whose upper classes are worthy of 'their rank, and by possessing the highest degree of 'culture, devoting themselves to the service of the State, 'and setting an example of patriotism, know how to 'preserve the influence legitimately their own. They 'would find a State with an excellent administration, 'where everything is in its right place, and where the 'most admirable order prevails in every branch of the 'social and political system.

"Prussia may be well compared to a massive structure 'of lofty proportions and astounding solidity, which, 'though it has nothing to delight the eye or speak to 'the heart, cannot but impress us with its grand 'symmetry, equally observable in its broad foundations 'and in the strong and sheltering roof.'

Such is the view of Baron Stoffel, military attaché to the French Embassy at Berlin; but his warnings were neglected by those who thought that to win battles it was enough to be Frenchmen. Why not? Is not that the lesson which Thiers, 'the national historian of 'France,' taught his countrymen to their ruin?

In the above picture, drawn by no friendly hand, we cannot fail to recognise the principal features of a country destined to greatness. Many charms found elsewhere may be wanting, but we may trace those strong stern truthful lineaments of the old Teutons, which ought not to seem strange or repulsive to the Anglo-Saxon. If England remains unconquered, unrevolutionised, undegenerate, who can say how much is due to Teuton blood?

Was there not the same tenacity, the same quiet, resolute purpose, the same devotion to 'duty,' not 'glory,' shown by the Germans in the late war as have marked the history of England? Would Englishmen have recognised their kinsmen during the siege of Paris outside or inside the walls? The question is not asked invidiously, but because great events bring out the national characteristics and afford the best opportunities of comparison. No more striking contrast could be conceived, or one more illustrative of national character, than was offered by the defenders and the beleaguerers of Paris, and we have the advantage of knowing the effect produced upon impartial beholders.

On the one side a city of two million inhabitants, the pick of France, French of the French, or, according to Victor Hugo, the very flower of humanity. Beginning with less than 100,000 disciplined soldiers and sailors and a deficiency of field-pieces and rifles, French genius and energy created an army of 400,000 men, with abundance of artillery and all requisite equipments, in three months! All that art and unwearied industry could do in making Paris impregnable was done. No tidings of defeats, however disastrous or unvaried, disheartened the inhabitants or shook their constancy. Disappointment followed disappointment, famine stared them in the face, yet Paris did not flinch. More than that, the very dregs and ruffianism of the city, who showed what crimes they were capable of when the siege was over, seemed to think of nothing but their patriotism while it lasted, or at least, while there was hope. All ranks and classes stood shoulder to shoulder on the walls, and none thought of danger or hardship.

So far all was admirable, and no Englishman could feel unmoved at the spectacle. But there was another side to the picture. Just as in the first Revolution there were traits that honoured humanity and others that

seemed to degrade man below the brute, so in 1870 very similar features were observable in Paris. Among many narrators of the siege, none gives a more picturesque or interesting account than the shrewd and impartial American author of *Shut up in Paris*. With wonderful graphic power and that humorous way of describing things peculiar to his countrymen, he is a close and apparently practised observer of men and bodies of men in public life. He watched the Parisians in their assemblies, their drills, their sorties, their clubs, their churches, their theatres, their mobs, and their *émeutes*. His general conclusion is not favourable, and it certainly agrees with that come to by other foreigners at the time, and is in harmony with the historical results. Had he been called upon to express his opinion of the moral, social, and political state of Paris in one word, he would probably have done so in the adjective 'corrupt,' rotten to the core! Unblushing vice, profligacy, obscenity, and blasphemy, seemed to break loose when the trammels of the Imperial régime were broken.

'Nothing in the way of literature could be more 'nauseous and enervating than the common reading of 'Paris. It suggests another point of resemblance be- 'tween the present situation here and that which we 'read of in the decline and fall of ancient nations.

'In 1848, a month before the revolution, De 'Tocqueville said in the Assembly, "Public morality is '"in a state of degradation which will shortly, perhaps '"immediately, hurry us into new revolutions." The 'prophecy was fulfilled. To make it now is to see it 'fulfilled again before our eyes.*

'The most grossly obscene brochures are cried upon 'the Boulevards by young women and little children. 'Some of them so abhorrent, that one feels upon 'glancing at them that no calamity could be too great

* *Shut up in Paris*, pp. 75, 76.

'for a city which has neither written law nor lynch law 'equal to the task of removing such odious abomi-'nations.

'An officer said on my comparing notes with him, 'Yes, and the conversation of my comrades is no better, 'it is so obscene and profane, &c. &c.

'Men in Paris reach a depth of degradation to which 'the women do not, and I believe cannot, follow them.

'The 201st (Batt. N. Guard) added profanation to 'intoxication. They broke into a church, arrayed them-'selves in such vestments as they could find, passed 'round the bread and wine, and peformed a sham mass.

'Republicanism cannot survive where there is not a 'certain degree of public intelligence, a certain amount 'of virtue, and a certain measure of self-reliance. The 'masses here have none of these.'*

Without the walls of Paris, beyond that chain of formidable forts occupying every height around the city, in a vast circle of above fifty miles, lay the besieging host. Not amounting at one time to above half the number of their blockaded enemy, they had to make up by skill and discipline what they wanted in numbers. To compare great things with small, they were somewhat in the position of the small British force that resolutely sat down before Delhi in the Indian Mutiny, though with numbers too scanty for the task. In each case superior efficiency alone could compensate for inferior forces. Those who have read Canon Kingsley's *The Roman and the Teuton*, may have been struck by the parallel between Rome as regarded by the Teuton of those days, and Paris as it must have appeared to the Teuton in 1870. In each case there was the rich, luxurious, and corrupt city, viewed with wonder and admiration by the hardy, simple children of the North. In each case there was the feeling that in the purer morals, the higher sense of duty,

* *Shut up in Paris*, pp. 77, 80, 106, 198.

the truthfulness, and in the military strength which these virtues give, the Northmen had the advantage. But in each case the great city had a prestige, a history and halo of traditional majesty which inspired respect. In both cases, too, the Teuton had wrongs to avenge, and had learned to regard the vices and the luxury of the citizens with contempt.

When the hardy Teuton of to-day first looked upon Paris spread like a map before him on a warm autumn evening, he might well have thought that he saw a speedy goal of his labours. But no such gigantic task perhaps was ever undertaken as that siege. A huge entrenched camp, with nearly half a million defenders, and in the centre of a martial population, was to be reduced by storm or famine. Supplies had to be drawn some 200 miles through a hostile country and in sight of the enemy's strongholds, one still held by 180,000 chosen soldiers. Winter was approaching. The besieged were confident and defiant. 'Not one German will re-'cross the frontier.'

It mattered not. One thing the hardy Teuton knew: happen what might happen, he would do his duty while life and health lasted: well must he have kept the resolve. Through frost and snow, through the blackest night, through storm of shot and shell and deadlier rifle, the hardy Teuton was ever at his post. Neither by force nor cunning could living thing penetrate that 'iron 'girdle,' where Faith, Obedience, and Duty kept guard.'

Within the walls were the shouts, the songs, the blasphemies of revellers. Without, after a Lutheran evening hymn, the stern silence of a race which has not yet cast off all reverence for God or man. On which side do Englishmen recognise the traits of their own race? with which will they cast in their lot?

Perhaps it may be considered unfair to make the comparison during the disastrous time of the siege, though

the scenes of the period which followed would make the comparison even less favourable to the French.

Shall we then turn to Paris in her former prosperity, ere her misfortunes began? It is easy to do so. Many saw, all have heard of those July days, when 'the joyous 'city'—which, better than Venice even, might be termed

> The pleasant place of all festivity
> The revel of the earth, the masque—(of devilry?)

was filled with mad rejoicings, festivity, and embracings. And what filled the streets with military music, and the Parisians' hearts with joy? It was all because the French Government, as the Minister declared, were going to war 'with a light heart.' And this upon a false pretext and with a dishonest object! Surely Englishmen will not recognise their kinsmen or their own principles on the *Western* side of the German frontier on this occasion either.

Of the two lately-belligerent nations, one is allied to us in race, in religion, in language. It has rarely been our enemy, often our friend. It has, literally, no one single interest opposed to ours, no sore memories, no exasperating traditions. In the matter of the rupture, we acknowledged that nation to be in the right.

With the other nation—the aggressor in the war, who rejected our advice and refused our arbitration—we have scarcely anything in common. In the past we have been, when not at war, for the most part jealous rivals. In the present, our home and foreign policy, our social, moral, and religious principles and views differ widely. And in the future, unless that nation or England should greatly change, it is hard to imagine what ties could unite us, by any moral or political sympathy.

But are there symptoms of such a fundamental change in France as that which regenerated Prussia after

the humiliation of Jena? Out of that great overthrow, and despite of the brutal tyranny with which the First Napoleon strove to crush out the national life of Prussia, she rose truly great and admirable. But where are the band of French patriots to emulate the Steins, the Schornhorsts, Gneisenaus, the Yorks, the Bluchers, and the speakers and writers that could boldly tell the truth to their countrymen? Prussia, then a very small State, was prostrated by a colossal power, but was not told that 'to the victor Providence gave success, but to her '(Prussia) glory.' So far from honeyed words and lying boasts being addressed to that country by her faithful sons, she was told that her defeat was, in part, at least the result of her faults. To free herself, she was told, she must raise herself above the corruptions and moral decay which prepared her fall, and she did so. It was under the cruel yoke of France, that Prussia worked out the greatest and noblest national regeneration of modern times. It was under that tyranny that the patriotic revival of 1813–14 was commenced and matured, and that discipline consolidated, which was to overthrow the Second Empire more decisively than the First.

Can any one wonder that the great German people remember the services then rendered by Prussia, and that they can forgive her many faults for those unspeakable benefits?

But there are no symptoms of such reformation in France. To gain a hearing their teachers must tell them that the nation is faultless though betrayed, invincible but badly led, and in all its metamorphoses 'the admiration, the envy, the teacher of the world.' No national restoration can be founded upon falsehood and vanity, nor is any fallen building restored without clearing away the rubbish; but it is precisely the rubbish

that Frenchmen cling to. An English writer* well acquainted with France thus speaks of the political incapacity of Frenchmen:—'To any one who lives long 'in France it becomes clear that the failure of French-'men to establish a polity at once orderly and pro-'gressive is due to no local or temporary cause, but to 'the build of the people's mind. . . . What they 'say of their own Bourbons is true of every one of 'them: they learn nothing and they forget nothing. 'What must strike every one who mixes with them is 'their *singular* incapacity for listening. It is a virtue 'of which they do not know the rudiments.'

The outlook for a people vain and fickle, a people who can neither forget their old delusions nor learn from their disasters, who cannot even listen to any voice but their own, is not promising. But such is France in 1872. The vanity which has outlived defeat unparalleled, what would it have been after successes?

From the victories of Germany, on the other hand, Europe has not had to undergo the infliction of any vainglorious boasting. We have business-like professional histories, but no pæans of victory. The German dishes retain their old names (and nastiness). Berlin is not entered by an Arc de Triomphe, though the captured guns would have made a colossal one in bronze. They did not, like Napoleon I. with the monument at Rosbach, spitefully destroy the memorial of an enemy's triumph, but left the Arc de Triomphe to tell of French victories, content with having surpassed them all.

The people who remain unchanged by such successes may certainly be said to have deserved them.

* The *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 7, 1872. The writer of this article is evidently well acquainted with France, and writes in a favourable—perhaps unduly favourable spirit.

CHAPTER V.

M. THIERS.

To speculate upon the future of France at this moment, when the events of the next day might confute the best-founded anticipations, would, as already said, be a vain task. All is provisional and in a state of transition.

And yet, in the strange political chaos of France, there is one element of comparative stability left, one 'known quantity,' one calculable force — the veteran statesman now presiding over the volcanic Republic.

To judge any nation is a hard task, but in M. Thiers we may be said to find an epitome and embodiment of the national characteristics of France, the brilliant qualities which have made her greatness, the sad defects which have caused her fall. If any one could correctly appreciate M. Thiers as a statesman, he would, at least, understand one dominant idea influencing the history of France since 1815. He would see how profoundly the unprincipled but dazzling period of the First Empire has demoralized that country. And yet it was less the military glories of that time, brilliant as they were, than the false lights and immoral teaching of the Napoleonic Legend, which injured France. For that perversion of the public mind in France M. Thiers is clearly responsible. It was, perhaps, the greatest but most fatal triumph of his genius that he could make a popular hero, the 'champion of the revolution' and the 'child of democracy,' out of the military despot who crushed

the revolution and heartily despised and suppressed the democrats. Napoleon I., who was thus made the idol of France, was not even a Frenchman by race or language, and his name, until altered by dropping a vowel, declared his Italian origin. A mere political accident, such as had very nearly made Corsica English,* had made it French territory two months before the birth of young Buonaparte, who thus became a French subject. But the honest sympathies of his ingenuous youth, so far from being French, were with Paoli and Corsican independence. France was to him then a foreign land and Frenchmen the oppressors of his native island.† Had he at that time, in the spirit of a Corsican "vendetta," vowed vengeance against France, how amply would he now see it satisfied. Whether Napoleon, apart from his own interest, ever felt any attachment for France, may be doubted. To English officers in 1814–15 he spoke disparagingly of the French, as being not a people but a populace.

Of M. Thiers, more than of any other public character, it might be said that the actual results of his efforts have contradicted his purposes, while in magnitude they must have exceeded his expectations. His true biography would, in some respects, seem incredible, and his epitaph, when written, will probably be the least true of those proverbially false compositions, though it may not involve one actual falsehood. His eulogists may truly describe him as the brilliant author of the *Consulat et l'Empire;* a man of genius, extensive knowledge, and eloquence; the persuasive public speaker, the statesman,

* Some trifling accident—probably, the absence of one Cabinet Minister or the sickness of another—may have decided England to refuse the proffered rule of Corsica. If so, how completely that accident altered the world's history! Minorca had been English shortly before, and it would not have been at variance with British policy in those days to have accepted Corsica. What misery would the world have been spared had the young Buonaparte been born a British subject!

† See LANFREY'S *Histoire de Napoleon I.*, vol. i. pp. 10, 15, 16, 17.

the minister, the patriot, the sufferer in the cause of liberty, the unwearied lover of his country, who even in old age traversed and re-traversed Europe to seek deliverance for France; he to whom Frenchmen of all parties alike looked up as the one man capable of saving his country. All this might be most truly written; and yet there is another and widely different epitaph which justice and candour would inscribe upon the tomb of the man whose brilliant abilities as a writer and speaker revived and consolidated the worst traditions of the First Napoleon, justified, in French eyes, his unprincipled aggressions, and, by fanning military ambition, for which he had not the excuse of a soldier, became the cause of ruin and humiliation to France.

The writer of the epitaph might say, but in more epigrammatic and suitable language,—

LOUIS ADOLPHE THIERS,

BORN APRIL 15, 1797; DIED SEPTEMBER 1,* 18— (*Procul esto*),
THE BRILLIANT WRITER, ORATOR, STATESMAN OF THREE REIGNS;
PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC FOR —— YEARS.
NO MAN LOVED FRANCE, HIS COUNTRY, MORE;
NONE CONTRIBUTED MORE LARGELY TO HER RUIN.
HIS WRITINGS EXALTED TO A CLIMAX THE MILITARY FAME OF FRANCE;
THOSE WRITINGS PREPARED FOR HER THE DEEPEST HUMILIATION.
HIS BRILLIANT EULOGY OF THE FIRST EMPIRE AND ITS CONQUESTS
LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE SECOND AND ITS DISASTERS.
HIS PATRIOTISM, WHICH WOULD NOT BELIEVE IN FRENCH DEFEAT,
WAS DESTINED TO SEE THE EXTREMITY OF FRENCH ABASEMENT.
AIMING AT THE SUBJECTION OF ALL EUROPE TO FRANCE,
HE COMPASSED THE SUBJUGATION OF FRANCE BY A SINGLE POWER.
THE FORTS WHICH HE DEVISED IN 1840 TO DEFY UNITED EUROPE,
HE BEHELD IN THE HANDS OF UNAIDED GERMANY.
HE WAS THE INVENTOR OF THE NAPOLEONIC LEGEND,
AND THE CAUSE OF ITS ENTIRE DISCREDIT.
HISTORIC TRUTH WAS NEVER MORE PERVERTED BY PATRIOTISM,
NEVER MORE SIGNALLY AVENGED BY EVENTS.
HAD THIERS WRITTEN TRULY OF WATERLOO
FRANCE WOULD NEVER HAVE DEPLORED SEDAN.

* It were an injustice to M. Thiers to believe that when his year has come, he could survive that fatal anniversary.

There is, in truth, a contradiction and inconsistency, not the fault of dishonesty or any consciously bad purpose, which makes the career of Thiers the strangest enigma. A Liberal, a Constitutionalist, Minister under a Constitutional King, and a parliamentary orator of the first rank, he became the admirer and eulogist of a military tyrant, who, having first deprived France of all liberty herself, made her his tool in oppressing other people. Thiers, the champion and ornament of Parliamentary Government, and born to civil life himself, awoke by his writings that military spirit which, in France, was sure to overthrow a pacific monarchy. By glorifying the First Empire he contributed powerfully to establish the Second upon the ruins of a constitutional monarchy which he desired to sustain. By inventing the Napoleonic legend he evoked the old spirit of aggression, which led, as a necessary consequence, to that military organization of Prussia which has proved the overthrow of France. Thus, the re-assertion of Napoleonic principles by Thiers* sounded the war-note which told Prussia to prepare, and the Italian and Mexican campaigns—gratuitous military enterprises, engendered by the very spirit which Thiers had evoked—hastened these preparations. The final act, the declaration of war—only justifiable upon M. Thiers' own principles, that France has a vested right in her neighbour's weakness—brought, as its just punishment, the humiliation of France.

If any man contributed more to that result than Thiers, his name remains unknown. Certainly the ex-Emperor did not; because, in the first place, he would never have been Emperor at all, had not Thiers, by his writings, prepared France for that usurpation; and,

* That M. Thiers was perfectly determined to carry into practice, when in office in 1840, the arrogant policy of the First Empire, will be shown further on in this chapter.

secondly, because Napoleon III. would gladly have remained the 'Napoleon of peace' had not the military traditions of the First Empire been reproduced in such glowing colours by that historian. There were two ways of writing the history of Napoleon I.: impartially —as has been done by M. Lanfrey, showing the wonderful achievements of that great commander (which needed no colouring), and doing justice to his transcendent military talents, while admitting his moral shortcomings and the fatal results of his mad ambition. There was another way, that adopted by M. Thiers, who wrote to make a popular hero and the benefactor of France out of a man who, with all his genius and abilities, was not morally great,* and who inflicted evils upon the nation the whole extent of which we cannot yet determine, as they may outlive us all. The genius of Thiers enabled him, and unhappily his disposition prompted him, to represent that side, and that side only, of the picture which was sure to inflame French vanity and pervert their views of public morality. Victory, glory, 'the Great Nation,' we hear much of; but nothing of the *little* nation, whose liberty was suppressed, whose tongues were tied; who shared, indeed, as did his favourite horse, in Napoleon's victories, but was just as much consulted about his wars or his treaties. This essential fact, with many others, M. Thiers slurs over, and by doing so he created the difficulty of accounting for the national desertion of his hero. That hero was, according to the legend, entitled to the affection and fidelity due to a general from the army he had often led to victory. As France, including some of Napoleon's

* De Quincey says of Napoleon I.: 'Napoleon was, as regards 'moral capacities even for common generosity, much more for magna-'nimity, about the poorest creature ever known.' Add to this defect, want of truth and honour, with a large share of the charlatan in his composition, and it reduces the giant to smaller proportions.

marshals even, notoriously did not manifest such gratitude, but the very reverse, the awkward sense of that shortcoming was felt to need an explanation. It was found, by adroitly turning attention from French defection to the wrongs of the 'Martyr of St. Helena,' and the tyranny, perfidy, &c. of England. By a very intelligible sequence of events, this misrepresentation led to the unpopularity and overthrow of Louis Philippe's government and the establishment of the Second Empire, with its Napoleonic pretensions, and the grand catastrophe. But this is to anticipate.

The large and influential share taken by the veteran statesman and historian Thiers in the affairs of France since her disasters is well known, but comparatively few who have not passed middle age are aware of his far more important share in producing these disasters. For not only was he a leading statesman and orator, a minister, and head of a cabinet several times, but on two occasions, before and after the fatal year 1870, he was looked up to in France as the necessary and only possible leader. His countrymen might differ as to his merits, but none denied that for good or evil he was the only man who could fill the first post at those moments.

M. Thiers is the living link which connects Imperial France in her ascendancy, with France in her abasement. It is not as the contemporary, or the historian only, but far more as the living embodiment, and in some sense official transmitter of Napoleonic policy, traditions, and feelings, that he may be said to have preserved the historical continuity of the First Empire, and thereby rendered France of 1870 responsible for the excesses which have been so amply avenged.

Born on April 15, 1797, Louis Adolphe Thiers * saw and lived amidst the scenes of military glory which

* M. Thiers seems to have been christened as 'Marie Joseph Louis 'Adolphe,' but to have dropped the first names.

turned the heads and fatally corrupted the moral principles of the Parisians. To the generation whose memory does not extend above thirty or forty years, the first Bonaparte belongs as much to a bygone period as Louis XVI., and neither his character nor policy seem to be matters of living interest or present concern. It is far otherwise with M. Thiers, to whom the person, the features, the *entourage* of 'the Emperor' are personal recollections; who, when impressions are deepest and feelings are warmest, imbibed an intense admiration of the great commander, his military glory, his extended rule, and his brilliant but transient prosperity. Those who can look back over near sixty years of manhood do not count time as do the young or middle-aged. Events of sixty years since are still to them part of their own, and therefore of contemporary history; for each man's own life is his measure of what is called living history.

Nor is it only in reference to personal memory that M. Thiers is the living depositary and the perpetuator of the Napoleonic traditions. As the popular historian he recorded, as the orator he enforced, and as the Prime Minister he sought to give effect to the evil policy of the idol of his youth and the devotion of his maturer years.

M. Thiers, according to his biographer—a devoted admirer, M. Alexandre Laya, who has written two volumes of 'historical studies' upon the 'Private, 'Political, and Historical Life' of the statesman—was a child of very precocious genius. The future historian of Napoleon I. owed his early education to the deep foresight with which that sovereign had sought to perpetuate his fame and dynasty in the hearts of Frenchmen. The prefects of departments were empowered to select promising boys of the humbler classes for gratuitous education in the Lycées Napoleon; and young Thiers was chosen for the Lycée of Marseilles. There,

as everywhere in after life, his talents were soon recognised, and the young burser (*boursier*) reached the head of the school. On leaving the Lycée he went to the School of Law at Aix to study for the bar, and there also distinguished himself by obtaining the first prize. As his liberal principles would have excluded him from that honour, he practised a somewhat characteristic stratagem, getting his essay posted in Paris. By doing so, he both concealed his own authorship and gave the manuscript a metropolitan prestige with the judge.

In 1821 Thiers went to Paris, where his faithful friend Mignet had preceded him and had become connected with the *Courrier Français*. Those were the days when the journalists were laying the foundation of that power which was soon to subvert the throne. Thiers soon found an opening for his extraordinary abilities in that branch of literature. Introduced by M. Manuel to the editor of the *Constitutionnel*, his vigorous style soon attracted attention. The good fortune of the *Constitutionnel* was marvellous, and the profits of the paper, which had been established by some shares of 1,000 fr. each, not even fully paid, rose to 600,000 francs. The superiority of the articles written by M. Thiers struck every one; the sensation he caused in the political salons was such as to make the proprietors proud of it. Thiers was enabled by a friend to purchase a share in the paper, which was the commencement of a large fortune due to his own talents and industry.

But this was only the dawn of his literary triumphs. He now became acquainted with all the celebrities of the day, his genius triumphing over every obstacle, including a manner said to have been ludicrously provincial, and an utter ignorance of social usages.* He was 'to be 'seen in the *salons* of MM. de Talleyrand, De Flahaut, 'and Ternaux, where all his illustrious contemporaries

* *Dictionnaire des Contemporains.*

'seemed to meet and pass in review before this new 'painter of men and manners.' To the earnest, energetic mind and the ardent patriotism of M. Thiers the politics of that day possessed an absorbing interest. In domestic politics his honest and sincere wish was for the establishment of a parliamentary government on the English model, and no man worked for that end with more zeal or judgment. His views on foreign policy were naturally formed by the peculiar circumstances of the day, which were very trying to the pride and patriotism of a Frenchman. From a dominant position in Europe, France had passed to a state of subjection and inferiority. The Army of Occupation had lately left Paris, but everything, even the royal state and surroundings, spoke of recent conquests. Beranger then flourished, 'the poet-statesman, the immortal Tyrtæus of modern 'times, whose songs turned each child who sang them 'into a soldier' and cordial hater of the foreigner. A great revolution had taken place, since 1814–15, when defeat even was welcome as the only termination to endless, ruinous wars and cruel conscriptions. A few years later the fickle population had forgotten facts and taken to fiction. Napoleon, so lately execrated, had become the popular hero and the 'Martyr of St. Helena,' though no French phrase ever had embodied more perverse untruthfulness or misrepresentation. Of course England, whose 'perfidy' had conquered, and whose cruelty had punished the Martyr, was especially detested; and the more so as she had taken the position which France had lost. To the ardent patriotism of Thiers, then engaged on his *History of the French Revolution*, the contrast between the triumph of the past and the humiliation of the present was naturally painful. Though the hated sound of the British drums was no longer heard in Paris, and the Duke of Wellington had ceased to be the military governor, he was still looked up to by all

Europe, and exercised an influence altogether exceptional as a quasi-generalissimo of the Allies. To Thiers, who used to term it the 'Agamemnonate of Wellington,' this overshadowing influence was the more odious because it affected the home as well as the foreign policy of France. The King had been enthroned by the victory of Wellington, and might possibly rely upon the same powerful arm against domestic opposition. Thus in the ambitious, active mind of the youthful Thiers considerations of the past, the present, and the future concurred to exasperate his anger against England. That anger, natural and excusable under the circumstances, took the form of a strong, settled aversion, clearly traceable in the writings and actions of a long life. The fact is well worthy of attention, since no man of his day has more powerfully influenced the public opinion and policy of France, and of that public opinion and policy a jealous ill-will to England has often been the key-note.

That the influence of M. Thiers upon French public opinion has not been exaggerated, may be inferred from the fact that between 1823 and 1827 his *History of the Revolution* had gone through fifteen editions, of which 150,000 copies were sold! Yet that work was very inferior in literary merit and popularity to its successor, the *History of the Consulate and Empire*, published nearly twenty years later. If the first may be said, by its revival of the Revolutionary traditions, to have aided powerfully in overthrowing the Monarchy of 1830, the second, by reviving Napoleonism, still more powerfully contributed to dethrone Louis Philippe in 1848. Thus the influence of the writer and statesman who now governs France may be traced in the overthrow of two dynasties within twenty years, but a stranger result still had to follow from his wonderful exertions. The very principles of ambition and warlike enterprise glorified by Thiers, which made a pacific King unpopular and enthroned a Napoleon, made

his overthrow a mere question of time. A self-respecting Europe will never tolerate the French domination which enchants the patriotism of a Thiers.

While the *History of the Revolution* was sowing the seeds of future changes, the youthful author was too impatient to await their development. Encouraged by his success in the *Constitutionnel*, M. Thiers, in conjunction with his old friend Mignet and Armand Carrel, established in January, 1830, a new daily paper, *Le National*. Its appearance was a great event in French history and almost a death-blow to the monarchy of the Restoration. In its pages M. Thiers, in language concise, nervous, vivid, and logical, explained the theory of parliamentary governments, then little understood in France. Perhaps no such masterly expositions of constitutional government were ever compressed into so small a space or couched in language so popular and convincing. But the gist of M. Thiers' exposition was summed up in the now famous expression, 'the King reigns but does not govern.' Sustained by arguments the most forcible, and expressed in language the most attractive, that theory was accepted by the French people, and rejected by the King. Thenceforth the monarchy was doomed.

The fierce struggle between the opposition press and the Government grew fiercer, events hurried to a crisis, and the fatal ordonnances suspending the liberty of the press appeared. The courage of M. Thiers was equal to his other qualifications and to the occasion. In the office of the *National* he was the first to declare 'we 'must refuse to obey the ordonnances,' and to propose a protest against them. That office, 'which had been 'the focus of the intellectual revolt, became the centre of armed insurrection,' and M. Thiers may be said to have become its soul. When its military success had been assured, M. Thiers advocated the election of the Duke of Orleans, and drew up that short, clear, stirring appeal

to the people which gave Louis Philippe his crown. In the few vigorous words which pronounced Charles X. impossible, the Republic inexpedient, and Louis Philippe the fittest choice, he managed to identify him with the Revolution, the Tricolor, and French victories. The proclamation, printed in the press of the *National*, was speedily circulated, and Thiers was the envoy chosen to offer the throne to the future king. From that moment the son of the small linendraper in Marseilles became one of the leading statesmen of France, and the man who, above all others, shaped her destinies!

In 1832 M. Thiers was Minister of the Interior, and towards its close Minister of Commerce and Public Works, in which capacity he was able to re-install the statue of his idol on the Vendôme Column, and to complete the 'Arc de Triomphe.' These acts of Napoleon-worship were natural and excusable enough in themselves, but formed links, nevertheless, in that fatal chain which connected the ambition and excesses of the First Empire with the ignominious overthrow of the Second. The stormy years which succeeded 1832, brought to the front all the firmness and courage, as well as skill, of the young Minister, and showed that he could imperil his popularity where his convictions demanded. In the critical days of 1834 he was recalled to the Home Ministry, and as such presented himself before the barricades of the Paris insurgents. When a ministerial crisis occurred in the same year, he showed his sense of his own value by contesting the claims of far older statesmen to the presidency of the Council, and making his own consent indispensable. In December, 1834, he became a member of the Académie Française, and early next year was by the side of Marshal Mortier when killed by Fieschi's 'infernal machine'—a crime which led to the laws against the Press and the suppression of trial by jury in certain political cases—laws of extreme, though neces-

sary severity, which Thiers did not shrink from advocating. In 1835 he was again Prime Minister, but resigned upon a financial question early in 1836, and was again restored to the same post after a few weeks with the additional office of Foreign Minister. As such he showed his consistent bias towards a warlike-policy which did not suit the pacific views of Louis Philippe, and again the Minister found himself out of office. Too restless to continue inactive, he led the Opposition in 1838; overthrew the Molé Ministry, and compelled the King, much against his wish, to give the first post, not to Marshal Soult, but to Thiers.

During the years between 1830 to 1840, the greatest difficulty of the peace-loving King was to resist the war-cry raised by vindictive feelings towards England, and hatred of the Treaties of 1815. To those feelings no Frenchman, nor any number of Frenchmen, had contributed so much as M. Thiers. The charge of a 'policy of peace at any price,' and of subserviency to England, were the constant weapons of the Opposition, and of the feelings which dictated the charge, the Bonapartists as well as Republicans were now beginning to take advantage. In the popular *History of the Revolution* by M. Thiers, the enemies of England and of Louis Philippe (who was but a very slippery friend) could find ample materials for calumny, and the cuckoo cry of 'Perfide Albion' filled the Press and very often the Chambers. As Foreign Minister, M. Thiers was certainly not open to the charge of undue leaning to England. He had already (in 1836) entered upon a course which was to reach a crisis in 1840, and which could only end in the Napoleonic project of a French Egypt, or of a war to prevent it. So dangerous to English interests would a French protectorate of Egypt have become, that great efforts were made to reinforce our Mediterranean fleet, but the better administration of the French navy enabled

them to maintain a superior force, and the situation became critical. Thiers, in strict consistency with his Napoleonic ideas, sought to give effect to them by establishing a French supremacy in the Mediterranean, before which, not England alone, but all Europe should bow. Lord Palmerston, however, who guided our foreign policy, and whose views were shared by all the other Powers, was far from accepting this position, and the quadruple alliance between Austria, Russia, Prussia, and England, was concluded. The bombardment of Acre, and the successful campaign in Syria, decided the matter in favour of Turkey and the four Powers, and in defiance of the threats of M. Thiers. He thereupon prepared for war, built the now famous fortifications of Paris, and strove to make the will of France prevail against that of united Europe. The prudence of Louis Philippe prevented a European conflagration which must have ended in the defeat of France. But it soon transpired that his Minister had contemplated a measure more in accordance with the traditions of the Empire than with international morality. Napoleon I. had never scrupled to seize upon neutral territory to injure an enemy, and Thiers, while copying his Egyptian policy, proposed to seize upon Minorca—the territory of neutral Spain*—just as Napoleon I. had seized upon neutral Malta. Beyond the indefensible injustice of the project, it would have added a sixth opponent to France, but the course entered upon was so hazardous, that

* Sir H. Bulwer, in his *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 241, says, 'I quote a letter from Lord Granville of October 20, because it 'refers to a singular intention which betokened that restless desire to do 'something when it cannot do the thing it wants, which has so often 'characterized the French Government. Lord Palmerston writes to Lord 'Granville, "Can you find out by any means at your disposal what is the '"*coup d'éclat* for which the French squadron has been brought back '"to Toulon? I conclude it is to meet and drive back the Russian '"squadron."'

nothing but desperate measures could give it any chance, and very desperate measures were, it is believed, in contemplation. It is related by Capefigue, the French historian, vol. xvi. p. 78, that the French Admiral in the Mediterranean, proposed to attack the British fleet (which was then only half-manned) without any declaration of war, and such was, unquestionably, the general wish of the French naval officers, including, it is thought, the Prince de Joinville. That Thiers himself inclined towards it is, at least, probable, but the King was, happily, more prudent than his Minister throughout this episode of ambitious designs and daring expedients.

Two mysterious incidents which future history may explain, but which are at present unpleasantly suggestive, attended this passage in history. The Turkish Capitan Pacha traitorously deserted to the Pacha of Egypt, then the enemy of the Porte, carrying off the whole Turkish fleet to Alexandria.* Such an act of

* The particulars of this shameful treason have never been published, diplomacy, perhaps wisely, shutting its eyes to facts which, if established, might implicate another Power and imperil a future good understanding. Some of Lord Palmerston's correspondence lately published lifts one corner of the veil. We find him writing to an ambassador in Paris, Lord Granville, under date, November 22, 1839 :—

'My dear Granville,—

'I understand that Louis Philippe said to some foreign Minister 'the other day that the reason why he protects Mehemet Ali is that 'France will probably be at war with England before two years are 'over, and that then the French will want the co-operation of Mehemet 'Ali's fleet in the Mediterranean—*a very friendly speech* if really made; 'but I had the information in a secret way, and tell you rather as a 'clue to sound by than as a statement you could repeat.

'Yours sincerely,

'Palmerston.'

On the *cui bono?* principle of Roman law, and taking into account the thoroughly disingenuous course followed by M. Thiers' Government on this occasion, it is, at least, probable that France had an understanding with the Capitan Pacha.

treachery, so contrary to Ottoman honour and traditions, was thought to have been brought about by some diplomacy to which France was not altogether a stranger. This desertion offered to France the means of uniting a naval force greatly superior to the British, and, if we may believe French writers, a plan was actually formed for manning the stolen fleet with sailors from Toulon. Articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of that time allude to the project.

Still, the reserve of ships in the British ports would in time have redressed the balance, but that difficulty for France was nearly being disposed of by a very opportune coincidence. It so happened that when the Government of M. Thiers saw its designs in Egypt baffled by the Quadruple Alliance, and the excitement against England was at its height in Paris, our chargé d'affaires, Mr. Henry Bulwer (the late Lord Dalling and Bulwer), received a private intimation to the effect that attempts would be made to burn our dockyards. This information he very naturally communicated to his chief, Lord Palmerston; and Lord Dalling gives (*Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 335) the following account of the matter:—

'This letter relates to a rather singular affair. 'Having been left, thus young in my career, at so 'important a post, at so important a time, I had taken 'the best steps I could, without being ostentatiously 'busy, to obtain all useful intelligence, and I received 'from a person who was generally accurate, information 'that an attempt to burn our fleet was about being 'made.

'The person in question could not, or would not, 'give any details. Lord Granville* had just come back, 'and I told him what had occurred. He did not think 'that information conveyed in this manner, even if

* The father of the present earl.

'correct, could be of much avail, and, in fact, dis-
'credited it altogether, but thought I ought to convey it
'to Lord Palmerston.

'Strange to say, an attempt was made to burn some
'of our ships the same day, or the day after, and Lord
'Palmerston's letter alludes to this attempt. I was, as
'I said, told of the intention to do so. I could not at
'the time learn anything more than I had stated, and
'Lord Palmerston and Lord Granville were both dis-
'posed to consider that the fires had been accidents,
'and my information mere coincidence. But a couple
'of months later Lord Granville said to me one day,
'"You remember that report you received as to the
'"intention to burn our ships? I disbelieved its truth
'"at the time, but I have good reason to know that
'"there was much more in the scheme which you heard
'"of than I supposed." And he then told me the
'name of the party who he had heard from good autho-
'rity had been engaged in it; a name not unknown in
'France—and, therefore, as it belongs to an honourable
'family, I shall not mention it. I may as well add,
'however, that I thought this business was directly
'connected with stock-jobbing, and only indirectly with
'politics.

'To make the matter intelligible, it may be added
'that two incendiary attempts were made,—one at
'Sheerness, which did no harm; and another at
'Devonport, about the same time, which burned the
'*Talavera*, 74, and *Imogene*, 28, injured the *Minden*,
'74, and destroyed the *Adelaide* gallery' (*Royal Adelaide's*).

Whoever may have caused these fires, they were very trifling compared to the European conflagration which M. Thiers had prepared, and which the King of the French prevented by dismissing him from the post of Prime Minister in October, 1840. Whether his views

were compatible with anything but a dominant France and a subject (or abject) Europe, we may judge by the speech in which M. Thiers explained his policy. On Nov. 27th of that year the fiery Minister thus addressed the French Chamber :—

'I wished to arm in order to obtain a modification 'of the treaty. I resolved on obtaining it, and I should 'have obtained it; and if I had not, I declare now that 'I should have gone to war, for the honour and interest 'of my country demanded it. When I saw that the 'treaty was being boldly executed, I wrote as follows to 'M. Guizot:* "We are arming, constantly arming; '"and if, when France is ready, if an arrangement does '"not take place, we shall have war." (*Great sensation.*) 'I do not hesitate in adopting an extreme course when 'I see the honour of my country is about to be com- 'promised. Yes, Gentlemen, I would have demanded 'the modification of the treaty. I would have demanded 'it when France was ready for action; and if it had 'been refused, though, as a statesman, I knew perfectly 'well how terrible the word war is for a country, I 'would have cried, War! war! and I should have found 'an echo in France. ("Bravo! bravo!" from the 'Left, and great agitation in the Chamber.) Let me 'be kept from power, let me be banished for ever, but 'let it not be said that as a French Minister I would 'have permitted language insulting to the honour of 'France. Yes, Gentlemen, whenever Europe — the 'whole of Europe—shall say to us, "If you do not '"choose such a thing, we will do it without you, and '"in spite of you," I would cry, War! Let us be what 'our fathers were; and let us never descend from the 'rank to which they raised us.' Such was the language of M. Thiers when, in 1840, Europe, finding

* Then French Ambassador in London.

France resolved that the Eastern Question should have no solution but that which suited France, resolved to act without her.

The English Minister of that day, however (Lord Palmerston), was not exactly the man to succumb to menaces, and his views are very concisely expressed in a letter to Lord Granville of October 8, 1840:—

'. . . . Pray go to the King immediately, and say you are instructed to deprecate, in the most friendly but at the same time the most earnest manner, steps which we hear are under consideration, and which, if taken, would make war inevitable, or at least render the continuance and resumption (if they have ceased) of friendly relations a matter of the utmost difficulty.

'We hear that two things are under consideration: first, what is now called an Anconade;* secondly, some declaration as to what France will and what she will not permit.

'Now, as to the first, it would be (and you will know how to convey the idea in civil terms) nothing more or less than an act of piracy.† The five Powers, France included, have declared their determination to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire. Four out of the five are labouring to carry their principles into practice. The fifth, for reasons of her own, declines being a party to the execution; and *therefore*, because the other four are acting up to her own principle, she is to seize possession of a portion of the territory of the very sovereign whom she has pledged herself to support. Such a proceeding would be so inconsistent with every principle which governs or ought to govern

* Landing troops somewhere in Turkey or elsewhere, as the French had formerly landed them at Ancona.

† Piracy of a kind, however, which Napoleon I. never shrank from —as in the case of Egypt and Malta, &c. &c.—and which, therefore, his eulogist M. Thiers might reasonably imitate.

'the intercourse between man and man and between 'nation and nation, that we are sure the King of the 'French will never permit a thing that would cast an 'indelible stain upon the honour of his crown. It 'would, besides, bring twenty or thirty Russian line-of-'battle ships into the Mediterranean, what to do when 'they got there it is not for us to say. But England 'could not remain a tame spectator of such a pro-'ceeding, and surely there is no need of creating fresh 'subjects of angry feeling between the two countries.

'Then as to a declaration. *If France makes us a 'friendly communication, tending to lead to an amicable dis-'cussion of the present state of affairs, we shall receive it 'and deal with it in the spirit in which it is made;* but if 'France haughtily tells the four Powers that she will 'permit them to do certain things in aid of the Sultan, 'but will not permit them to do other things, it is 'manifest that such communication can only tend to 'make all reconciliation impossible.

'Your Servant,

'PALMERSTON.'

Thus in the year 1840 the Napoleonic pretension of a right to make the will of France the law of Europe was maintained by M. Thiers and positively rejected by Lord Palmerston, with the full concurrence of the other Powers. Few Englishmen, even among those who consider the resistance of Prussia to French predominance as an act of usurpation, will think Lord Palmerston's language unbecoming, or will contend that upon a point of vital importance to English interests, England ought to succumb to French dictation.

Some weeks of peril to Europe elapsed, during which Louis Philippe vacillated between peace and war, but finally deciding on peace, his Minister Thiers resigned.

With most men political responsibility ceases with the tenure of office, but it proved otherwise with M. Thiers. Unquestionably he did more to perpetuate and render popular the dangerous traditions of the First Empire when out of office than when he held the highest posts in the Ministry.

But before adverting to the effect produced by the writings of M. Thiers, especially the *History of the Consulate and the Empire*, which was, in fact, the vindication—in French phrase the rehabilitation—of the First Empire and the title deed of the Second, another event of 1840 is here to be recounted. That event offers a landmark by which we may judge how fatally M. Thiers succeeded in propagating the admiration which he felt himself for the First Empire, and thus paving the way for the Second and Sedan.

Under the Ministry of M. Thiers the King was persuaded, with the consent of England, to bring home the remains of Napoleon from St. Helena, and one of the King's sons was charged with the mission. Taken by itself, the act was of little significance at the time, though we can now see in it a step towards the revival of Bonapartism in France.

In August Louis Napoleon, considering, perhaps, that if France was bent upon honouring the dead uncle she might look with favour upon his living nephew and heir, made his attempt at Boulogne.

The enterprise touched upon the ill-defined line which Frenchmen say divides the sublime from the ridiculous. But the pear was not ripe. The *true* history of the First Empire was then engraved in the memory of a living generation, who had themselves witnessed the catastrophe of the Imperial episode, who had *heard* of Marengo and Austerlitz and Jena, but had *seen* two occupations of Paris, had become familiar with the features of Wellington as the governor, and of English

and other foreign soldiers as the garrison, of the capital. M. Thiers had not then invented the Napoleonic 'legend' designed to show Frenchmen that the wholly exceptional position won for them, by a wholly exceptional military genius, was only the natural and normal state of things—a state of things morally right and reasonable, which France was bound to restore and Europe to acquiesce in. The man who ten years later, after being rehabilitated by the author of *The Consulate and Empire*, was to unite above seven million votes in his favour, was on this occasion arrested by a few National Guards and thrown into prison like any ordinary offender against the laws.

How well it had been for France, how well for Europe, for the tens of thousands of widows and orphans and helpless cripples, now dragging out a miserable existence, how well for historical truth and for political morality, had Napoleonism found a watery grave with its few zealous friends—had it perished off the harbour of Boulogne—and M. Thiers had never written his brilliant but immoral and pernicious history!

It was, however, to be the destiny of that really ardent patriot and worshipper of Napoleonism to effect a revolution in the popular feelings and political creed of France, to set before Frenchmen a picture of such a France as one Napoleon had created, and which nothing less than a Napoleon could restore, but not even a Napoleon could long maintain. Relieved from the responsibility of office, M. Thiers undertook the heavier and disastrous responsibility of inflaming the national vanity and ambition by the perversion of history. If history be 'philosophy teaching by examples,' it is essential that its lessons should not be perverted, and great is the offence of the historian who confounds success with glory, justifies triumphant aggression, and misrepresents its inevitable punishment; who, like

M. Thiers, attributes to a combination of accidents the necessary results of the general resentment against insatiable ambition and vanity.

But M. Thiers was not guilty only in these respects. Out of his historical picture of a triumphant France under the First Empire he elaborates a political theory of a dominant France and a subject Europe. He strives to persuade his readers (as he probably has persuaded himself) that such a state of things is due to the moral, intellectual, and military superiority of Frenchmen, and ought to be tolerable to other countries, or whether tolerable or not, should be enforced by war. That this was no mere political speculation, but a theory which M. Thiers undertook to enforce practically, he showed in 1840, when Europe differed from France on the Eastern Question. Thus it was not as the political historian only that he incurred the responsibility of misleading his countrymen, but as uniting in himself every circumstance and antecedent that could give either weight or popularity to his lessons. As a writer he had few rivals, and the Academy had set the stamp of membership upon his literary labours. But, beyond his literary distinction, he was a leading member of the French Chamber, a Minister of State, twice Premier, and so early as 1834–5 a political necessity, the indispensable man of the epoch. The brilliant author, when he finished this history, might say, '*Exegi monumentum ære perennius*,' more lasting than brass, perhaps, and certainly outlasting the national glory it was intended to enhance.

When such a man, so widely celebrated, so influential, and so experienced, undertook to teach his countrymen lessons for the future from the history of the past, it is evident that the task involved momentous consequences for good or evil. Lessons there were, obvious enough and wholesome enough also, to be learned from the career of an Italian adventurer, born in

the obscurity of a backward island, who had achieved a throne for himself and given thrones to his brothers; but who having made enemies of all other Powers by his ambition, became the victim of their just retribution.

It did not demand all the varied talents of a Thiers to point the moral, or to deduce the very evident conclusions from such a history. The true lesson, if world-old and commonplace, was exactly what Frenchmen needed at that time, and at all times. That lesson would have saved them from Sedan, or, had a Prussian aggression upon a pacific France been possible, would have left her surrounded by allies ready to support her. Far different, however, was the lesson inculcated by M. Thiers when deprived of his portfolio he took up in an evil hour for France the pen which has wrought such mischief.

Judging from internal evidence in the *History of the Consulate and the Empire*, and of the circumstances attending his dismissal from office in 1840, it is evident that much political and angry feeling actuated the author. Faithful to the Napoleonic traditions which he has always held, M. Thiers had resolved to attain in peace that foothold in Egypt which the First Napoleon sought by war. That scheme of a French protectorate had been baffled by the Quadruple Alliance and the decisive action of England in Syria, much as the French-Egyptian expedition of 1798 had been, and M. Thiers no doubt resented his defeat. That resentment supplies the key-note to the *Consulate and Empire*, where a tone of unworthy detraction as regards England is apparent in every page. It is probable also that M. Thiers, feeling some soreness against his sovereign for preferring a safe peace to a most hazardous war, sought to contrast the brilliant victories of the Empire with the 'inglorious 'peace' of Louis Philippe's reign. If such was the intention, it succeeded only too well for the sovereign,

for the historian, and, above all, for France. The anti-English feeling in France, which had never died out since Waterloo, had, under M. Thiers' ministry in 1840, reached fever-heat, and the popular cry against Louis Philippe was an imputed subserviency to England and a desire for 'peace at any price.' This cry naturally gained in intensity when, in 1845, the *History of the Consulate and the Empire* appeared. As men's minds became more inflamed with its delusive pictures of past glory, they loathed a *régime* which prized prosperity at home beyond foreign conquest. Nor was this unnatural, for M. Thiers had presented his readers with a gorgeous painting of France triumphant abroad, prosperous and happy at home, an object of admiration to friends and envy to her foes; a painting calculated to dazzle more sober judgments than Frenchmen generally possess. But it is not by such colouring of facts only that the mischief has been done. M. Thiers might have been pardoned his 'Chauvinism,' though hardly worthy of his great abilities, had he not perverted history and outraged political morality.

His wish seems to have been to compose a 'Golden 'legend,' or rather epic, in which the good principle should be represented by France, and the evil by her enemies inspired by England. Dramatic propriety required the final triumph of the good principle, but the facts were the other way, and M. Thiers cannot forgive them their perverseness. His Iliad should have ended in the fall of Ilium and the triumph of the Corsican Achilles, but Ilium had sallied out, made Achilles prisoner, and sent him into banishment, thus spoiling the epic, and requiring a peculiar adaptation of the main facts. It would have been easy to have done full justice to the indisputable military talents of Napoleon or the military glory of France, without maintaining the moral justice of his aggressions or the invincibility of French soldiers, which is really M. Thiers'

contention. Of course he is compelled to admit that certain battles were lost, but he always contends that French defeats could, would, should, ought, and but for exceptional circumstances *must* infallibly have been victories.* His hero, Napoleon, though among the greatest of modern commanders, was not exempt from error even in military judgment, but M. Thiers will not allow this. Thus the expedition to Egypt was a brilliant conception, though, as the event proved, hazardous and liable to failure. Napoleon was probably aware of the adverse as well as the favourable chances, but his eulogist will not admit that a small French army cut off from its supplies and deserted by its leader would have succumbed but for the absolute incompetence of its general, Menou. He goes the length of arguing that Egypt would have remained to France until 1815 in spite of the English mastery of the sea and of the fact that every transmarine possession of France was actually captured. As no human being is exempt from error in peace, neither is any so exempt in war, and had not M. Thiers been writing with a political object he would have admitted so clear a proposition. But the object of M. Thiers was to hold out a historical realization of that dominant aggression of France which he has always advocated, and wished to reconcile not only with what is politically practicable but morally justifiable. The task was, however, beyond the abilities, great as they are, of M. Thiers. Out of France no one will believe that the ambition which did not hesitate at the base murder

* Take, as a typical instance among many, the English landing in Egypt, and subsequent battle of Alexandria. M. Thiers represents the British force as double the French, as occupying a better position, and flanked by gun-boats on each wing. Surely these advantages might have accounted even for so unparalleled a circumstance as an English victory over a French army. M. Thiers does not think so, and occupies page after page in accounting for a British success.

of one prince, the equally base kidnapping of an allied monarch, and the annexation of many independent States from mere lust of dominion, was 'glorious' to France. It is true that in the case of the murder of the Duc d'Enghien M. Thiers condemns that base act, but rather in the terms he would have applied to a fatal political mistake than to a moral crime; and in the next page to that which records the crime, the criminal is spoken of as 'cet homme extraordinaire, d'un esprit si grand, si 'juste, d'un cœur si généreux.' M. Thiers admits that the act (he does not call it crime) of his hero 'placed 'him in a state of moral opposition to Europe, which soon 'rendered a general war inevitable;' but inasmuch as it also compelled him to seek 'a magnificent peace at the 'extreme bounds of Europe,' the murder was perhaps venial. Whether that peace which despoiled princes and peoples of territory and treasure because they disapproved the acts of the 'just and generous' perpetrator was really glorious to France may be disputed.

The next incident in the history of Napoleon which admitted of no apology, and had to be related in all its unmixed baseness and perfidy (the kidnapping of Charles IV. and Ferdinand VII.) must have severely tried the Napoleon-worship of M. Thiers. But the duty of the historian was rendered easier in this case from the fact that the treachery of Napoleon brought neither profit nor honour to France. It brought disgrace and disaster, the capitulations of two armies, the defeat of many others, the expulsion of the usurping King Joseph, and the steady advance of Wellington from victory to victory, until he stood a conqueror upon French soil. For a crime so profitless M. Thiers had no sympathy, and he actually applies the words '*bassesses*,' '*fourberie*,' and '*perfidie*' to the acts of that man for whom he claims the love and esteem of all Frenchmen. But while very fairly denouncing the unparalleled trea-

chery practised upon an ally (Spain), M. Thiers shows that he fully adopts the Napoleonic policy towards neutrals. French troops had invaded Portugal upon no other plea than that, small and weak, she had desired to trade with England and refused to declare an utterly causeless war against her. But this invasion, in M. Thiers' eyes, was quite justified, because Portugal had been commercially useful to England; and in criticising Napoleon's policy towards Spain he gives his own ideas of the course which should have been adopted by France. M. Thiers thinks that the King of Portugal, who had actually complied with the tyrannical demands of France and declared war against England, and had given no cause of offence, should be dethroned and his dominions given to Spain in exchange for Spanish territories to be given to France.*

It has been said by an English writer† that M. Thiers' *History of the Consulate and Empire* is the most immoral book that has been written, and, strong as the censure sounds, it cannot be condemned unless by those who justify the Napoleonic policy which that book is intended to glorify. Success or failure seem to be the only tests by which the policy of Napoleon is judged, and in no case does M. Thiers condemn an attack upon a weak neutral (if successful) where France is benefited by it.

Two propositions seem to M. Thiers indisputable:—

1. The subordination of all international rights to the 'glory' and interest of France.

2. The invincibility of the French soldier, unless under exceptional circumstances easily avoided.

* This scheme, which M. Thiers seems to think consistent with honesty, is given vol. viii. p. 428–9. Brussels edition.

† The anonymous reviewer of the *History of the Consulate and the Empire* in *The Times*.

From these two propositions a corollary follows which seems in the last degree 'immoral,' and which must necessarily lead any ruler of France into a policy fatal to the liberty of Europe, or to the integrity and independence of France; in other words, into Napoleonism perpetually triumphant or, to Sedan.

The necessary corollary from the subordination of the rights of other nations to the glory and interest of France, and the fact of French invincibility, is that France has the moral right and the power to make her will absolute; and this whether under Napoleon she claims half of Europe, or under M. Thiers she would content herself with her 'natural frontier of the Alps and the Rhine.'* Now, as mankind is constituted, can any more immoral doctrine be propounded than that a community or an individual has both the moral right and the power to appropriate a neighbour's goods? Would not M. Thiers be the first to resent such a claim on the part of, say, Prussia?

This is no question of literary or historical criticism. M. Thiers was called by the late Emperor, in an official document citing a passage from the *History of the Consulate and Empire*, 'the *national* historian' of France, and he has the national characteristics, both good and evil — brilliancy, lucidity, industry in collection of details; but indifference to moral principle and a reprehensible postponement of truth when opposed to national vanity. It may have afforded intense pleasure to the patriotic instincts of the historian to glorify the triumphant aggressions of France, to exalt her victories, and stimulate his countrymen by vainglorious representations of

* M. Thiers is so moderate in his views as to claim these boundaries only; that is, he would only absorb all Belgium and parts of Holland and Prussia. (See vol. xvi. p. 763.) But then any neutral territory, such as the Balearic Islands, may be seized when desirable, as M. Thiers proposed when in power in 1840.

their own invincibility; but the pleasure was too dearly bought, the lesson too successfully inculcated. The Parisians would have the left bank of the Rhine, would shout 'A Berlin!' and we know the result. To that result no one can have contributed as much as M. Thiers, not only from the stimulus given to French aggressiveness, but from the wound inflicted upon the feelings and the moral convictions of other Powers. Englishmen can judge here without any feelings of wounded self-love, because they regard, with a complacency perhaps not unlike Chauvinism, M. Thiers' explanation of English victories as due only to the fact of some incompetent French marshal commanding instead of M. Thiers himself. It is otherwise with the gallant Germans, who, though defeated, have good reasons not to accept either the military or the political theory of M. Thiers. They do not acknowledge the moral superiority or the invincibility of Frenchmen, and they never will again acquiesce in that French domination which M. Thiers thinks the right of his countrymen. Why should they? Why should any Englishman imagine that a people as brave as themselves should bear a yoke which no Englishman would tolerate? Prussians may manfully admit their discomfiture at Jena by the greatest captain of modern times while pointing to the far more glorious victory of Rosbach, gained by 22,000 Prussians over 63,000 French and Austrians, taking sixty-seven guns and twenty-three colours. It is not because a brilliant series of victories were gained under a wholly exceptional leadership that France had any right to arrogate to herself the attribute of invincibility; she cannot even claim that leader as a countryman. Napoleone Buonaparte, as his name would show, was not French but Corsican by birth, Italian by race, and French only by the accident of his island birthplace being annexed to France two months before his birth. Garibaldi's nationality is as much French as was

Napoleon's, who did not alter his blood by dropping a vowel out of his name. France, then, had not the questionable honour of his birth; nor does it at all follow that another nation—Germany, for instance—would not have achieved equal or greater conquests under such a leader. Rome conquered the world, but was worsted by an inferior people led by Hannibal. Many nations of ancient and modern times, not the greatest of the epoch, have had their career of victory.

M. Thiers tells us, vol. viii. p. 442, that France, in 1809, had three quarters of a million 'old soldiers 'equal *at least* (!) to the soldiers of Cæsar, and led by 'a man who, in military genius, was superior to the 'Roman captain.' The verdict upon the comparative merit of the soldiers and the two great conquerors may be correct. Possibly Cæsar and Napoleon, should the question arise in the Elysian shades, may refer it to the arbitration of Alexander rather than Thiers, but in any case Napoleon, like Cæsar, has passed away, and with him has passed (it is to be hoped for ever) the power of France to tyrannize over Europe. Why, then, should a position which can only rest upon military success be claimed for all time because exceptional circumstances once gave it? If France be the country of great victories, she is also the country of great defeats. Her history has been glorious, but chequered. Thrice have her monarchs succumbed in battle to be carried away captives, two to die in captivity. Thrice in this century, under the Bonapartes, has the country been conquered and the capital occupied. Twice in the fourteenth century did a very inferior English force crush the whole military aristocracy of France. In the next century, again, a similar battle overthrew the monarchy and gave the French throne to an English prince. In the beginning of last century the Duke of Marlborough's victories

compelled Louis XIV. to sue for peace, and in the present century the Duke of Wellington (in spite of M. Thiers' depreciatory description of him) defeated each French marshal in turn, and finally Napoleon himself, in the battle which gave Europe peace for forty years. Independently, therefore, of the war of 1870-71, whose overwhelming defeats threw all the victories of Napoleon into the shade, history by no means bears out M. Thiers' theory.

That fatal though ill-founded theory is at once the explanation of the late war and the justification of the apparently harsh terms of peace. Upon maintaining or abandoning that theory must the future of France depend, and a wayward fate has left the decision of this point to no other man than the 'inventor of the 'Napoleonic legend,' the Thiers who governed France in 1840! As men do not change a life-long belief after seventy, there are grounds to fear that M. Thiers meditates a *revanche*, which may complete the ruin of his country; but France, in her extreme need, has found but one pilot, and to him for good and for evil she must, for the present, trust her destinies.

There is something melancholy in the thought that the fate of a great nation should be confessedly dependent upon the will of one man, and on a life which cannot endure much longer; more melancholy still to think that the inability of an old man to see that his ideas of a Napoleonic supremacy are out of date, may bring utter destruction upon his country.

It is not because his intentions are good, and his patriotism pure and disinterested, that he may not prove the worst enemy of his country. It is the well-meaning people often that do the mischief, and were the history of 'men who have ruined their country' written, it would, perhaps, contain more good men than bad. A bad man does not win the public confidence, nor does a man

wanting in patriotism attain a dangerous popularity. It was the mistaken patriotism of Thiers that won his popularity, and his parliamentary talents give him an ascendancy over the National Assembly, which makes him a necessity—whether a fatal necessity or not time will show.

It is that peculiarity in the position of M. Thiers—the parliamentary ascendancy due to his talents—which has a certain interest for us in England. It suggests the question, Could the case arise of an English statesman raised to power and maintained there contrary to the national interest, because his debating powers made him the necessary leader of the House of Commons? Of course no such Minister could continue to hold power, unless his popularity out of doors was such as to secure him a majority in a new general election.

But supposing that condition, could a Minister known to hold or incline to political opinions which, if put in practice, would prove as injurious to England as the foreign policy of Thiers has to France, maintain himself in power? If we conceive a statesman of genius, eloquence, long parliamentary experience, great ability, having successfully discharged the duties of subordinate offices, but withal a man essentially disqualified for governing England, becoming Premier, because his position in the House of Commons made it a political necessity—such a statesman, circumstances aiding, might he not bring England to ruin?

Probably no such person exists in England; but should he ever exist or be 'developed' out of some existing statesman, would not the danger be great? For such a Minister, with all the admirable qualities supposed, might still be wanting in sound judgment and knowledge of mankind, in tact and temper. He might be rash, impulsive, emotional, and, in dealing either with internal difficulties in times of excitement or with foreign

war, might bring the country to ruin, where a more practical statesman of less genius might be a safer guide.

Theoretically, England could not, like France at this moment, be at the mercy of a dangerous Minister merely because there was no one qualified to take his place, or with administrative experience sufficient to gain the public confidence. There would be the constitutional expedient of a change of ministry or a dissolution. But in the case of the exceptional Minister supposed the danger would thereby be increased. Gifted, let us suppose, with restless and untiring energy, and that sort of impulsiveness and amiability which affect democratic sympathies, he might appeal to the masses as their especial friend and champion, and be returned with a larger majority and more popular programme. It is only the moral and intellectual impulse of such a character that could vanquish the inertia of English Conservative instincts. But such a man, however upright and honourable in heart, mistaking his own ambition for patriotic aspirations, might bring about a catastrophe which he never contemplated.

As a man is said to carry the seeds of his mortal disease from birth, so happy, prosperous England may have, either living or coming, the author of her future ruin. But, if so, he will probably be the last man to intend enacting such a part. 'Is thy servant a dog 'that he should do this great thing?' may be his inward reflection when he takes the fatal step from which there is no returning. Cromwell never meant to do all that he finally effected, and the men who have brought France to her present state were mostly patriotic. If French authorities of weight are to be believed, universal suffrage is the mortal disease from which the body politic is suffering in France. It is among the nostrums of the future in England, a country whose social organi-

zation is even less suited to it. But when did the ruin of a neighbour teach a man with a favourite theory?

Thiers, the man of unblemished private character, of the purest and most ardent patriotism, of abilities rarely equalled; Thiers, the experienced statesman, the diplomatist, the historian, the patriot ready to die for his country, brought it to ruin by stimulating its warlike ambition. An English counterpart of Thiers would not endanger this country by such means; but could he by taking the very opposite course and winning a cheap popularity — by discouraging every feeling which constitutes our military strength, and by neglecting our national defences? A reduction of our navy and army would be popular with the masses; and how far might it be carried? All armaments cost money, and their necessity in peace-time is not evident to the masses, who think they can be extemporized in war. But quarrels we have seen arise 'in a perfectly clear sky,' and only ten days elapsed in 1870 between the first pretext and the declaration of war. In 1867, without the shadow of a pretext, France resolved to appropriate Belgium, when we little suspected that our faithful ally was about to spring a mine under our feet. Then we have military stations at Gibraltar, Malta, Bermuda; they cost us much money; why not abolish them and thus reduce taxation? Mr. Cobden (said to have been offered a seat in the Cabinet) published reasons for surrendering Gibraltar, and Mr. Gladstone prepared the way for ceding the Ionian Islands. The Ionian people desired it, England professes to rule in conformity with the people's wishes, she must withdraw and leave them free. But a Minister guided by reasons of abstract right and by theories logically defensible, may have to go further than the Ionian Islands in his concessions. There is India occupied by 80,000 British troops; there is Ireland calling for Home Rule; there is a question—only in the

germ now—which gave some trouble to the Roman Republic, and might well, under unsteady statesmanship, upset a quasi-republican monarchy—*the Land Question.*

With the Ballot established, and further extension of the suffrage half promised, that question might mature rapidly. The cry of 'Free Air, Free Water, and Free 'Land!' would find favour with English Reds, Irish Greens, and neo-Republicans.* In fact, there is a large and promising field for any English statesman who would rival Thiers, and who might add to genius, eloquence, energy, and popular sympathies a little intellectual unsteadiness.

* Though we do not, like the French, run to 'phrases' in England, we have our stock fallacies and claptraps. 'Many liberal measures, 'denounced at the time as dangerous to the constitution, have not 'proved so:' *therefore*, we may advance indefinitely in the path of democracy, is one of the most plausible and least logical.

CHAPTER VI.

COUNT BENEDETTI.

COUNT BENEDETTI * is not a man of mark like Thiers, and cannot be compared to him either in mental calibre or the influence exercised over his countrymen. But the name of Benedetti will ever be associated with two events, one among the most disastrous, the other among the most discreditable, in the annals of European diplomacy. In the French rupture with Prussia in 1870, he followed his instructions only too successfully in making war inevitable. In the earlier transaction of 1866–67, the secret plot against Belgium, he reaped for France all the dishonour, but missed the benefit, of a projected treachery. It is to the latter subject, the plot of the ex-Emperor to seize Belgium, a friendly and inoffensive State which he was bound by treaty and good faith to respect, that this chapter will be devoted.

There is something marvellous and unaccountable in the apathy with which England passed over a transaction almost unparalleled in modern history and nearly affecting her honour and interests. Yet had the projected appropriation of Belgium taken place, England would have been compelled in honour to go to war with France; no country could have felt safer from attack in peace than

* Of course no personal reflection on Count Benedetti is implied in his private character. It was his misfortune to represent an unprincipled policy.

in war; Europe would have reverted to the violence and spoliation of barbarous ages, and the only law would have been that of the strongest. England as a guarantor is peculiarly bound to uphold the standard of Right, and if on this occasion she appeared indifferent to the meditated wrong, it may have been her reluctance to believe in the dishonesty of a "loyal ally."

Yet the guilt of the ex-Emperor is as clearly demonstrated as any incident in history, and the admitted facts proving that guilt are few, simple, and decisive. They illustrate, moreover, the principles of the Second Empire, and show that they were essentially the same as those of the First, and therefore incompatible with the safety of Europe. But, further, irrespective of its instructiveness and importance, the history of the Benedetti plot is so striking, so full even of dramatic interest, that it well repays attention. Had Shakespeare dramatized the story, and with his disregard of 'the unities' brought the chief characters and events on the stage, what a striking drama would he have produced! It would have ended too, as dramas ought to end, in the complete exposure and confusion of the guilty agents, the signal punishment of the chief delinquents, and the happy deliverance of the intended victim (Belgium). What, then, are the *admitted* facts (postponing those that are controversial) which establish the intention of France to invade and appropriate a friendly neighbour's territory in profound peace?

First, it is admitted that in 1866–67 France sought 'territorial compensation' for the German acquisitions and alliance of Prussia in the Austro-German war. Count Benedetti tells us that he was instructed to ask for this and that German territory and fortress, and for the Duchy of Luxembourg. He tells us further that Prussia refused to make such concessions, and suggested that France should seek the compensation

she desired in other quarters. It is further admitted by Benedetti that the subject of annexing Belgium to France was made a matter of discussion, but, as he asserts, upon the suggestion of Count Bismarck. From these demands of Prussia and negociations thereon no results followed until 1870.

In that year, France having declared war against Prussia, Count Bismarck, in the month of July, published the 'Secret Project of a Treaty' between France and Prussia, alleging that it was proposed by Count Benedetti, the French Ambassador, in the year 1867.*

The French Government indignantly repudiated the 'Project.' Whereupon Count Bismarck gave the world a lithographed facsimile of the original document, with all its erasures, corrections, and alterations, stating that the original in his possession was in Count Benedetti's handwriting, upon the official paper of the French Embassy.

Count Benedetti upon this admitted that the alleged 'Project' was in his handwriting, but alleged that it was only a rough sketch made by him, giving the substance of suggestions thrown out by Count Bismarck, but not accepted by France.

As this assertion was not supported by any evidence, Count Bismarck, who was not then in the possession of the papers captured at Cerçay, left Count Benedetti's excuse to the judgment of the world.

After the peace, M. Benedetti undertook to mend his case by means of a book, *Ma Mission en Prusse*, in which he repeated at greater length his former assertion of entire innocence in the matter of the 'Project.' As the documents needed to support his denials were still

* Upon the question of this date it is probable that Count Benedetti is right in fixing it in 1866 rather than 1867. It is of little importance.

wanting, he explained that fact by saying * they had been in M. Rouher's hands, who had not deposited them in the Foreign Office.

In reply, Von Bismarck published the very documents referred to by M. Benedetti, which had been captured by the Germans in M. Rouher's house near Cerçay. But those documents, so far from exculpating M. Benedetti, supplied the links wanting to connect the 'Project of 'Treaty' with the instructions of his own Government as to the acquisition of Belgium and Luxembourg for France. Count Bismarck added that he had 'other interesting 'papers in the same handwriting' (Benedetti's), which would be published if necessary; but Count Benedetti attempted no further reply, and left his adversary's last charge unanswered.

Such are the facts as admitted; what judgment would an impartial mind form upon them? If the same species of evidence were applied to any case in ordinary English life, there could hardly be two opinions as to the conclusion to be drawn. Most English householders, whether as magistrates or as serving upon grand juries or upon special or petty juries, can appreciate evidence, and are accustomed to deal with the lives, liberties, and property of their fellow-subjects according to its force. How, then, would they deal with a prisoner accused of forgery under circumstances precisely parallel to those of the Benedetti Project? It is easy to transfer the features of the actual to an imaginary case more within the range of our ordinary experience.

We may suppose that two commercial firms, repre-

* *Ma Mission en Prusse*, p. 194. 'On me demandera pourquoi 'je ne produis pas, à l'appui de mes argumentations, ma correspondance 'des derniers jours de 1866. En voici la raison. . . . Il n'y 'avait donc pas à ce moment de ministre des affaires étrangères. . . . 'M. Rouher n'a pas déposé au ministère, n'ayant jamais pris la direction, 'la correspondance que j'eu pendant quelques jours échangée avec lui.'

sented by their respective agents A. and B., have had business transactions in which B. was confessedly instructed to obtain money from the firm represented by A. It is further admitted that in the course of the negociation about money an illegal method of procuring it was discussed—on the proposal of B. as A. avers, or on the proposal of A. as B. declares.

Upon a serious quarrel taking place between the two firms, A. asserts that B. had forged a bill of exchange, and proposed that the firm represented by A. should assist in obtaining money upon it. B. indignantly denies the fact, but A. produces the bill in B.'s handwriting. B. acknowledges his handwriting, but says he only made out the bill at A.'s suggestion, and without any fraudulent intent, which, he adds, could be easily proved but for the loss of his correspondence with A. Upon this A. produces the correspondence (which B. had believed to be burned), and it contains private letters from the firm to their agent B. plainly suggesting the forged bill. B. upon seeing the letters becomes dumb.

Would any English judge, juror, or magistrate hesitate about the guilt of B. under these circumstances, which were *mutatis mutandis* exactly those of the Benedetti case?

But Count Benedetti, naturally desiring to relieve himself from the charge of proposing a flagitious scheme, and still more perhaps from proposing it in vain, while leaving the damning proofs of his guilt in his adversary's hands, writes a book in his own defence. And what do we find in that book? Much in vindication of Benedetti's diplomatic career; as when he claims to have been successful in three separate missions—that for obtaining the cession of Nice and Savoy, that for a peace between Prussia and Austria after Sadowa, and that for obtaining the renunciation of the Hohenzollern candidature. So far the book may have served its purpose, but it does not even attempt the only line of defence

which the case of the 'Project' admitted of. The patent facts to be disposed of were the existence of an iniquitous 'Project' of a secret treaty with Prussia, confessedly in Benedetti's handwriting; and the circumstance that the 'Project' would have substantially given to France what he was desired to obtain for her—territorial compensation. If, as Benedetti affirms, the 'Project,' though in his handwriting, was not his own, but Bismarck's, and was rejected by France, the facts could easily be proved by the correspondence between the Ambassador and his Government. There must have been a first despatch from him communicating the astounding proposition with his own answer, whether saying that he should refer it to his Government, or rejecting it on his own responsibility. There must have been the reply of the French Government rejecting an offer which to any honourable Government would have been insulting, and probably further correspondence thereon. Authentic letters to that effect would have afforded affirmative evidence, just as the perfect absence of all mention of the 'Project' might be negative evidence as to its reality. But M. Benedetti produces no such letters, nor any other contemporary documents, though he quotes, p. 195, a letter from M. Rouher dated at Cerçay, August 6, 1866, and one from the ex-Emperor dated August 26, 1866. The ex-Emperor's letter, so far as it proves anything, proves his readiness to deal with the territories of other people (Saxony in this case), and contains the suspicious paragraph, 'Mais tout cela ne doit être insinué qu'amicalement. Le Traité doit rester *secret*.' Why secret if it was honest? Where Benedetti gives any of his own letters they establish the anxiety of the French Government to obtain German territory, and the hopelessness in his opinion of their success. They show the conviction of the German nation that French ambition was their real danger. Thus, p. 172, he writes:—'The Prince

'Royal, so profoundly impressed with the danger of the 'policy which he sees in action, declared lately to one of 'my colleagues, with extreme vivacity, that he preferred 'war to the cession of the Duchies acquired in exchange 'for the county of Glatz. In short, M. le Ministre, I 'may state a real calming down in the public opinion 'of Prussia; but if it has ceased to be openly hostile to 'us, it is not sufficiently favourable to allow us to dis-'pense with the utmost carefulness. Notwithstanding 'present circumstances and the prevalent conviction that 'they might have to seek our support, people here don't 'forget that Prussia need not fear the ambition of other 'Powers, and that in France, on the contrary, they 'dream of the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine. 'That conviction disquiets the public mind, and prevents 'it doing that justice to the Emperor which is his due.' (The Prussians may think they did that justice at Sedan.) So far, then, Count Benedetti only admits what all the world knew—that France was eager to obtain her neighbour's territory, and that Prussia was resolved not to cede any. Connecting these admissions with the fact that the ex-Emperor demanded the Duchy of Luxembourg, failing to get Prussian territory, the anterior probability of the 'Project' is not weakened.

But Count Benedetti was aware that he had not only to clear himself, but to throw the guilt and odium of the 'Project' on Von Bismarck; and in his preface, p. 10, he appears about to pledge himself to that effect:—'You 'will observe that I have told you nothing on the subject 'of the pretended Treaty which I am supposed to have 'submitted to the approbation of M. de Bismarck. I 'have already explained that matter, but I shall return 'to it in the publication which I now announce to you' (his book here considered). Benedetti continues his preface with the assertion that had Prussia been defeated

instead of being successful, Count Bismarck could not have survived an act of such outrageous disloyalty, but that victory covers every misdeed. 'Providence, how-'ever, has not said its last word, and if we had a return 'of fortune, or if the question now raised by Prussia 'caused new complications, certain Cabinets, such as 'those of London and Brussels, would show less reserve 'than they have up to the present time' (this is diplomatically mysterious); 'and thence you would see, 'perhaps, a clear proof that the project of *reuniting* Bel-'gium to France was a purely Prussian conception. 'Besides, what would this trick of M. de Bismarck 'prove? That in dealing with him any one would 'expose himself to be deceived.'

What the writer meant by this sally is not very intelligible. If the proof of his assertion is only to come when fortune smiles on France, we may have long to wait, but in the meanwhile what further has he to allege in proof of his assertion as to his own innocence and Count Bismarck's guilt? Absolutely nothing! At p. 194 Benedetti says very truly, 'I shall be asked why 'do I not produce my correspondence in the end of '1866 to support my arguments. Here is the reason:— '. . . There was not at that moment any Minister of 'Foreign Affairs. . . . . M. Rouher had not placed the 'correspondence I had with him for several days in the 'Foreign Office, because he had not taken possession.' Fatal assertion! Count Bismarck seems the Nemesis of French diplomacy. In 1870 he confronted France with the original text of the scandalous 'Project,' and in 1871 he evoked from their hiding-place the missing documents which were to confound her ambassador. These documents were lost indeed to M. Benedetti, who must earnestly have hoped they would never again see the light; but they were safely stored in the armoury of his adversary, to be produced at the critical moment.

It is part of the strong, impetuous, and somewhat domineering character of Count Bismarck to be very outspoken and to go straight to the point. His answer to Count Benedetti's attempted vindication was to publish in the German paper *Reichs-Anzeiger* that luckless ambassador's own correspondence with his Government and the instructions upon which he acted. The publication was on the 20th October, 1871, and if any one had doubted the French origin of the famous project before, it left no excuse for such incredulity.

A first letter from the Ambassador on his arrival at Berlin to the Foreign Minister of France is dated August 5, and acknowledges the receipt of 'the text of 'the secret conditions.' It expresses the Ambassador's zealous resolve to enforce the views of his Government, believing that firmness will be the best policy. It adds—which must have amused Count Bismarck as he read it—that, considering the temper of that Minister, it was not the writer's intention to be *present* when Bismarck should realise the fact of the left bank of the Rhine being demanded, but that a copy of the draft should be left in his hands, and that the writer would see him next day and report in what temper he should be found. Upon that point the redoubtable Chancellor left no doubt at the next interview. He told Benedetti that the demand meant war, and that he would do well to explain matters in person at Paris to prevent it. Benedetti returned to Paris, and the ex-Emperor published a letter calculated to soothe the irritation which the demand for German territory had caused throughout Germany. Benedetti having returned to Berlin, a letter of instructions was sent to him, containing the substance of the 'Project of Treaty,' but giving also alternative proposals to be used as might seem expedient according to the temper of Prussia, *i.e.* Count Bismarck. The frontier of 1814 and the annexation of Belgium and Luxembourg

were to be asked for, with a secret treaty, offensive and defensive, between France and Prussia. If the frontier of 1814, implying the cession to France of Saarbruck, Saarlouis, and Landau, which last, the text says, 'is 'but a dilapidated nest of a place,' should prove unacceptable, then the Duchy of Luxembourg is to be named in the public treaty, and the *reunion* of Belgium is to be the subject of a secret treaty. To mitigate the anger of England Antwerp may be made a free port, but it must not be ceded to Holland, nor must Prussia acquire Maestricht. Finally, if difficulties arise on other points, the least France requires is the acquisition of Luxembourg by an avowed treaty, and Belgium by a secret convention. But there must be a *treaty, offensive and defensive*, between France and Prussia, which shall leave to France the choice of her own time for annexing Belgium, Prussia engaging to assist by force of arms; * presumably against English (or Russian) interference.

Such was the general outline of the demands which the French Government, in a despatch of August 16, instructed Count Benedetti to make at Berlin. To this despatch he replies on the 23rd, sending a draft treaty conceived in the exact spirit of his instructions. The draft is annotated in Paris with additions and corrections in another hand, and so altered *assumes the exact form of the notorious 'Project of Treaty.'* It might be said that beyond this no evidence was needed, and no proof could go so far, as establishing the fact that the 'Project of Treaty' in Count Benedetti's handwriting was drawn up in accordance with the orders of his Government. It follows, therefore, that the assertion of its having been suggested by Count Bismarck is utterly false. But that Minister, having the whole official correspondence between Bene-

* As France could not need such aid against Belgium, it was clearly against the apprehended interference of England or Russia that she sought Prussian co-operation.

detti and the French Government in his hands, thought fit to give still more of the documents supposed to be missing. He gives the letter of the Foreign Minister of France acknowledging Count Benedetti's draft treaty. It is written on official paper. It speaks of some indemnity to Holland for the loss of Luxembourg,* of the cost in money of the arrangement, and it reverts to the acquisition of Luxembourg immediately, and the future annexation of Belgium under the secret treaty. The despatch is long, and in many different forms shows that the annexation of Belgium was a settled point in the Emperor's mind. A letter from Count Benedetti in reply, dated August 29, expresses doubts whether Count Bismarck really means to play his part in the contemplated secret treaty. Benedetti expresses a suspicion that Prussia has been negociating with Russia, and has received such promises of support as may make him indifferent to a French alliance.

This seems to have been the beginning of the end of Count Benedetti's intrigues. He had at this time placed in his adversary's hand the weapons which could always be fatally used against him. He had been drawn into negociations implying loss of time, and Prussia had replenished her magazines, repaired the waste of the late Austro-Prussian war, and had possibly secured the alliance of Russia. But it was not at this date that the negociations came to an end. Though Benedetti had sufficient penetration to discover thus early that Prussia was not anxious about a project which was to benefit France alone, he was no match for a Bismarck. The game of that sagacious Minister was, as he tells us, in the interests of peace, 'to leave the French diplomatists 'to those illusions which are peculiar to them.'

* The allusion to the indemnification of Holland for the loss of territory utterly disproves the allegation that Prussia was to take Holland itself.

Count Bismarck did not think it necessary to give any more of the correspondence captured at Cerçay, though he speaks of one of the letters as in Benedetti's 'handwriting, like so many other interesting documents 'of the same kind.' He concludes the published correspondence with the words, 'But we have no wish to 'indulge in disclosures beyond those imperatively 'required for defensive purposes. . . . Until forced to 'resume this task we shall resist the temptation to 'make a more unreserved use of the copious materials 'at our disposal.'

It is needless to say that Count Benedetti did not provoke a fulfilment of this threat. Utterly confuted by the very documents upon which he affected to rely for establishing his innocence when he believed in their non-existence, he stood before Europe convicted by his own witnesses, summoned as it were from the grave to overwhelm him. And of what does Napoleonic France, in the person of her ambassador, stand convicted? It may be safely answered of a faithless, dishonourable, and piratical design against a defenceless and unoffending neighbour, whom she was bound by treaty to defend. It is worth while to examine this point, because it gives the measure of political morality in a country governed by Napoleonic principles, and of the security which any weak or unprepared country would enjoy should that fatal rule be restored.

In describing this Benedetti project as 'piratical,' the word is used in the same sense which Lord Palmerston once used* it, as applicable to an attack upon a

* In 1840, when Lord Palmerston learned that France intended to seize upon Minorca, the territory of Spain, to avenge herself upon the other Powers, he said, writing to Earl Granville, October 8, 1840, 'Now, as to the first, it would be (and you will know how to convey the 'idea in civil terms) nothing more or less than an act of piracy.'—*Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 339.

peaceful and unoffending State, without any grievance and without declaration of war. For we may assume that there would have been no such declaration where there was no shadow of ground even for diplomatic remonstrances. It is the most favourable supposition for the French Government to assume that it would not have added unnecessary false pretences to a predetermined act of lawless violence, but would have marched one or more armies into Belgium and taken possession. There might have been a proclamation to the Belgian people, congratulating them on their being 'reunited' to France, with some commonplaces about a common language and origin, and perhaps the modern Cæsar would have quoted his great prototype to prove it, in the passage 'horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ.' There might also have been a diplomatic note, addressed to the various Cabinets of Europe, explaining how righteous, from a Napoleonic point of view, was the act or 'reunion.' But nothing could of course lessen or excuse its naked iniquity. What Napoleon III. proposed to do to Belgium he might with as little or rather with less dishonour have done to England, as a stronger State, or to any country reposing in the delusive belief that invasion could only occur in war.

Such a violation of all public laws would be conformable to Napoleonic traditions. It would be less base than the treacherous attack of the First Napoleon upon Spain, a country then in the strictest alliance with him, and actually supplying him with ships of war and soldiers. The projected attack on Belgium would probably have been free from all the preliminary frauds and falsehoods by which the Royal Family of Spain was kidnapped and the Spanish fortresses treacherously occupied. But there is a sufficient family resemblance between the two acts to justify the assertion that a Napoleonic France *must* be, as it ever has been, a danger

to Europe and a curse to France. The very essence of Napoleonism is the substitution of the tinsel 'glory' for the solid gold of honour and honesty. It cannot be repeated too often that M. Thiers, by making the national hero out of a man who was neither truthful, honest, nor honourable, demoralized his countrymen, and, as his conduct in 1840 showed, himself also. The all-pervading idea of Napoleonic France is that 'glory,' which is there only a synonym for French success, sanctifies everything—even a manifest breach of truth, honesty, justice, and international law. It is this perversion of the national conscience which made the dishonest secret negociations of 1866 relative to Belgium possible. It was the same cause which led to the false pretences of July, 1870. The best friend of France cannot regret that even by the greatest of military disasters, and by a far more dishonouring diplomatic exposure, she should escape from the moral degradation of Napoleonism. She is less dishonoured by the German occupation of her territory at this moment than she would have been by her own occupation of Belgium under the Benedetti 'Project.'

Of the clause in the projected treaty stipulating an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia, as a weapon against England, it is unnecessary to speak. It was of course very unworthy of a 'loyal ally,' but compared to the meditated seizure of Belgium it was but a minor iniquity. It ought, however, to open the eyes of Englishmen to the position of Continental States which had the misfortune to be conterminous with France under the Napoleonic rule. Those Englishmen also who argued against the assumed severity of the German conditions of peace, or those who argued that, whatever the First Napoleon did after Jena, modern civilization and humanity repudiates the retention of an enemy's territory, may learn from the Benedetti 'Project' how far

such reasoning applies to France. It is not the country which proposed to appropriate the whole of its neighbour's territory in peace that can complain of losing two of its own provinces in war. There is another aspect of the Benedetti 'Project,' hardly less important than that which has been already discussed. How far was Count Bismarck the accomplice of Count Benedetti?

The projected treaty is one between France and Prussia, presumably for their *mutual* benefit, and at the expense of Belgium and the King of Holland,—should he refuse the offered compensation for his Duchy of Luxembourg. It has been demonstrated, as might easily have been inferred, that the 'Project' emanated from France, whose interests were most obviously at stake; but did Count Bismarck really give any encouragement or countenance to the scheme, and, if so, in what degree?

There are two lines of action, either of which the Prussian Chancellor may be supposed to have taken; the third, suggested by Count Benedetti, may be dismissed as contrary to the facts proved.

First. He may have received the proposals of Count Benedetti with favour, intending to carry them into effect.

Secondly. He may have merely received the 'Project' from Count Benedetti, and seeing that a direct refusal might precipitate a war, kept up a dilatory pretence of negociation upon it to gain time.

It is needless to say that the first event would have been only less dishonourable to Prussia, than originating the plot was to France. The question is, was that course adopted? In forming an opinion, we have first to consider the fact that the treaty, which would have given France all she desired, was never concluded, and that the obstacle was unlikely to have arisen on the side of France; that Benedetti, in his correspondence, at a very early stage of the negociations reports his

belief that Prussia was not sincere in desiring to conclude the treaty; that while the treaty would give much to France, it would give absolutely nothing (territorially) to Prussia or to Germany, an objection which the ex-Emperor had foreseen; that the answer to this objection, as contained in the Benedetti correspondence, cannot be supposed to have satisfied Prussia, as it only consisted in the assertion that she would secure the alliance of France. The very object of the treaty must have proved the worthlessness of any such assurances, as that object implied the absence of all good faith and honour in the contracting parties. But, further, to say that Prussia would gain nothing by the treaty is to understate the case. It was greatly against her interest to place an ambitious military neighbour on her own frontier, from Maestricht to the southernmost point of Luxembourg. Prussia, therefore, in accepting the treaty, would have incurred the dishonour of an unprincipled conspiracy, would have placed a possible enemy instead of a neutral on her frontier, would have incurred the just resentment of England, and, without gaining a foot of territory, would have greatly strengthened a dangerous rival.

Still further, when we compare Count Bismarck with his diplomatic adversary, and know that, without incurring any such danger or disadvantages, he obtained all the treaty could have given him, the conclusion seems irresistible. It is only giving Count Bismarck credit for the ability he has so abundantly shown, to believe that he was not caught in a trap which his maladroit tempter had forgotten even to bait.

No weight has been attached here to the moral considerations which, nevertheless, must have more or less influenced Prussia in the matter. Though it is a melancholy fact that one European sovereign was to be found who could plot a treacherous attack upon a peaceful neighbour, the theory of chances, even, would suggest

that there were not two equally ready. It has been an unworthy fashion among some public men in England to calumniate the King of Prussia, but there are no real grounds for it; and there are, on the other hand, substantial grounds for believing him incapable of a dishonourable action. It is to be remembered also that the Germans, a moral and religious people, averse to war and its sacrifices, would have learned with unmitigated disgust some day that their country was bound to fight for France to maintain her in possession of stolen territory. Lastly, if Prussia had taken upon herself the onerous obligations of the projected treaty, her only motive must have been an unworthy fear of France, and a preference for dishonour to danger. Is that the personal character of the King, of Bismarck, or of the Prince Royal?

The second explanation of the part which the Prussian negociator may have taken relative to the Benedetti 'Project' is open to no such objections. The 'Project,' such as we know it to be, though obviously detrimental to Prussia if concluded, might be most useful to her as a negociation, during the pendency of which France would be kept from any aggression. It is sufficient to consider the circumstances of Prussia at the time to see how important delay was to her, if France, as seemed possible, meditated any attack to obtain the coveted territories.

The South German States, upon whose co-operation in war Prussia must have depended if she hoped to meet the foe on equal terms, had been arrayed against her only two months previously in alliance with Austria. The annexed provinces had also been enemies in that war, and the inhabitants, although Germans, were far from Prussians in feeling. The embers of the fierce passions which the war had kindled could not, in the nature of things, have perfectly cooled in two or three

months; nor, in fact, had the organization, civil and military, of the new kingdom of Prussia, been more than commenced. The great Prussian Minister had a giant's task upon his hands in that month of August, when the French Ambassador came to him with offers of a dishonourable alliance, and no obscure intimation that the alternative was a rupture. Now war with France at that moment might mean the revival of civil war in Germany and the undoing of the great work of German unity which Prussia was effecting. It is very conceivable, therefore, that a Minister who would have indignantly repulsed the same overtures a few months later, and perhaps shown the Ambassador the door, might feel compelled to temporise under circumstances so dangerously critical. It is, moreover, accordant with the character of the German Chancellor that he should have felt pleasure in 'leaving French 'diplomatists to those illusions which are peculiar to 'them,' as he expressed it, and playing a game of diplomatic chess wherein he felt his own superiority. That Count Bismarck must have felt his own mental and diplomatic superiority is manifest, for he not only checkmated, but stultified his adversary, making him furnish in his own handwriting the proofs of an intended treachery, and the weapon with which it could be foiled.

The subject, involving as it does the character of the Great Power which has succeeded to the primacy of Europe, is one of European interest, for upon it the future hopes of that Continent appear to depend. It would be a sad prospect if one unprincipled and aggressive Power should fall by a striking act of retributive justice, only to make way for a rival no better or more scrupulous. Happily, upon a fair balance of evidence and probabilities, the German Chancellor's story appears as consistent and probable as his adversary's is the reverse. Another French diplomatist of the epoch, the

Duke de Gramont, had to tell his own story of the ill-conceived and ill-starred rupture of 1870. He also had come in diplomatic contact with the redoubtable Chancellor, and has lately, like his agent, Count Benedetti, written a book* to vindicate himself. It is not very successful, nor, in fact, could it be, so far as its main end is concerned; but it is cruel to Count Benedetti in assailing his veracity, the very point where he needed support in his contest with Count Bismarck. Benedetti, in telling his own story of the rupture in 1870, takes credit for having happily concluded the negociation, when his official superior, the Duke, spoiled all by directing him to make a new demand. To this the Duke de Gramont replies by giving his Ambassador the 'lie polite,' in an original and somewhat whimsical phrase. After saying that he is obliged 'to correct the 'lamentable errors contained in Count Benedetti's book,' he continues, 'It pains me to contradict, in the most 'formal manner, the assertions of an agent with whom 'I had long been on good terms, and who was my 'colleague before circumstances placed him under my 'orders; but facts have sometimes in their very nature 'a kind of brutality about them which it is impossible 'to smooth down' ('les faits ont quelquefois par eux-'mêmes une espèce de brutalité dont il est presque impos-'sible de tempérer l'expression'); and the 'brutal facts'† related by the Duke do seem to contradict the Ambassador. The two may, however, be left to settle the question of comparative veracity between them, though Prince Bismarck will probably think the slur thrown

* *La France et la Prusse avant la Guerre*, par le Duc de Gramont, ancien Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, pp. 158–9.

† Ibid. pp. 158–9. An English poet has said, 'Facts are stubborn 'things,' but their 'brutality' is an amusing French idea. It probably often occurred to M. Thiers, in writing his history, where great defeats ought to have been great victories but for 'the brutality of the fact.'

upon his adversary very opportune. The Duke furnishes incidentally another weapon against Benedetti where, arguing (very inconclusively) that Prussia, not France, desired war in 1870, he adds, 'Is fecit cui prodest.' It certainly was France, and not Prussia, that was to *profit* by the projected treaty, and, on the Duke's theory, must have originated it.

Against the numerous arguments which establish Count Bismarck's assertion, there only seems one of any weight on the other side to be considered. It seems almost incredible that a French diplomatist of any ability should put so fatal a document as the 'Project' in his opponent's hands without seeing his way and feeling sure of his ground. Upon this difficulty Count Benedetti's narrative throws no light, for of course no one can accept the theory that in guileless simplicity he wrote down whatever his wily opponent dictated, and gave him the fatal paper without a thought of harm. If so, as *The Times* wrote, 'to what purpose did he spend his early life in 'the Levant, or was he born in Corsica, the son of a 'Greek father?' *

The solution of the difficulty seems to be found in the fact that the French Ambassador, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the ex-Emperor himself, were very unequally matched against Count Bismarck. Twice it happened to the ex-Emperor, a man by no means wanting in ability, to come into contact with men of far greater

* The words of the article may not be correctly given from memory. Those who know the Mediterranean well are aware that the Corsicans do not represent Arcadian innocence, and that of the Greeks it may still be said, as Byron sang of yore—

'Still to the neighbouring ports they waft
Proverbial wiles and ancient craft.'

As to the Levantines, whether Christians, Jews, Turks, or Infidels, they live strictly up to one scriptural text, slightly altered: 'Let every man 'defraud and go beyond his brother.' But even there a Greco-Corsican ought to be heavily handicapped in the race.

mental calibre than himself—viz. Cavour and Bismarck. On both occasions he was foiled and lost his head. No two men could be more different than Cavour and Bismarck, and no circumstances more diverse, in certain respects, than those of Italy and Prussia; but the more pliant Italian and the strenuous Teuton equally baffled the man who never doubted that he was master of the situation, and who in truth was so. But, whether from over-confidence or from some other reason, Napoleon III. chose to place in the Foreign Office a man who, according to Bismarck,* 'was 'always the most mediocre of diplomatists, and known 'to be such by Napoleon III.' Of course it was from that 'most mediocre' diplomatist that Benedetti received his instructions; and a game played between the first statesman of his day and mediocrity would naturally admit of surprises and startling results. What part the 'illusions which are peculiar to French diplomatists' played in the transaction, or what was their nature, Count Bismarck has not explained. If they were the belief that other nations see the French as Frenchmen see themselves, or that each French diplomatist enjoys natural advantages not bestowed upon his opponents, these delusions would have contributed to the discomfiture of Count Benedetti.

Taking all the details of the memorable negociation that are known, with the obvious interests of the contending parties, and the actual result, it is not hard to supply the missing links in accordance with probability and with Count Bismarck's statements. Count Benedetti was sent to Berlin with demands for German territory and fortresses which could neither be ceded with

* M. Jules Favre, in his *Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale*, vol. i. p. 177, says that Count Bismarck, speaking to him during the interview at Ferrières, said, 'Une telle résolution prise par des hommes 'comme M. de Gramont et M. Ollivier! Le premier n'a jamais été que 'le plus médiocre des diplomates. Napoléon III. le jugeait ainsi.'

honour nor safety. The demand was so ill-judged and offensive that the most pacific of Germans would have greatly preferred war. Count Bismarck saw his advantage immediately, for his opponent had offered the very battle-field on which all Germany would and ought to rally. He plainly told Benedetti that the demand meant war, and that unless the Emperor desired it, he had better return to Paris and explain how matters stood. Benedetti, with a previous bravado about maintaining the demands, went back and informed his master that German territory could only be won by a successful war. Napoleon III. saw his mistake, and reflected that so long as he could enlarge his dominions and obtain adjacent territory it did not matter much at whose expense it was done. 'It is ill shearing a wolf,' the Scotch proverb says, and there was the Belgian sheep with its rich and undefended fleece inviting the shearer. Count Benedetti returned with his new instructions. It was no longer Prussian, nor even German territory (except so far as Luxembourg was, in one political sense, German) that was to be asked. Luxembourg belonged to the King of Holland, who might be compensated. Belgium had been French before, and might be 'reunited.' ('Reunion' and 'rectification of frontiers' are diplomatic terms for robbery.) By this plan Germany would lose nothing herself, and might fairly be asked to assist in robbing others. Such was evidently the rough sketch of the famous 'Project of Treaty.' It was broached obscurely, no doubt, at first, and later in all its iniquity and odiousness, its unprincipled greed, and its short-sighted cunning, to—of all men in the world—Count Bismarck! That he saw with a single glance the weakness of his opponents, and the immense advantage which Prussia might derive from such a blunder, is only to say that he was Count Bismarck. The policy of the ex-Emperor had left France without a single friend

except England, and here was a plan based upon treachery to that very friend!

All that Prussia needed for herself she had already obtained. Her policy was to maintain the *status quo*, and by no means to add to the territory and military power of France, still less to guarantee her spoils against the apprehended resentment of England or Russia. The game of Count Bismarck was simply delay; each month added to the strength of Germany's new organization. If only the French negociator could be deluded into the belief that he was outwitting his wary adversary, and into furnishing some proof of the intended treachery which should compromise France with England, the diplomatic game was won; and won it certainly was, by how much skill on the part of the Prussian player the world may never know. But the astounding false move of his French adversary will ever remain the opprobrium of French diplomatists.

So read, the whole story is perfectly intelligible, consistent, and probable. It casts the most indelible stain upon the honour of Napoleonic France, but does not compromise Prussia.

One thing only remains unexplained and inexplicable. Some Englishmen who know that a French 'Project' for a treacherous attack upon Belgium, with an equally treacherous precaution against English interference, still exists in the handwriting of the French Ambassador, can nevertheless talk of 'our faithful ally.'

For the benefit of such persons an impartial American's view of the whole matter is added in the Appendix, with a lithograph facsimile of the famous 'Projet de Traité.'

CHAPTER VII.

RETROSPECT OF THE ANGLO-FRENCH ALLIANCE.

The greatest political fact in the history of the last forty years, and the pivot upon which European history may be said to have turned, has been the alliance or good understanding between France and England. Happily for the just appreciation of that alliance, it has not been made a party question in England; each party in the State having equally acknowledged its desirableness and value. It has had its vicissitudes, its difficulties, and even dangers; it has not been wholly beneficial to England; but still its general results have been favourable to the peace and liberty of Europe, the tranquillity and security of France, and the welfare of England.

Thus much being granted, there is another aspect of the question which should not be overlooked, whether in striving to appreciate the past or to seek guidance in it for the future. In that aspect it will appear that the Anglo-French Alliance was precarious, one-sided, and exposed to dangers arising from French pretensions hardly suspected, and never admitted by any English Government. Isolated facts of past history may have little comparative importance relative to the future; but where those facts resulted from an arrogant, ill-founded, and inadmissible political theory, that theory gives importance to the facts. It is contended here that French policy during that alliance was influenced more or less by the theory that France might dictate to

Europe, but that Europe might not dictate to France. In other words, that France had established a supremacy to which other nations ought to submit. That political presumption which among enlightened Frenchmen sprang from misconceptions of history, and among the majority from knowing nothing of it, may seem incredible to Englishmen; yet it moulded the policy of M. Thiers, who may be taken as a representative French statesman, and it nearly involved France in a war with all Europe thirty years ago.

To establish this view it is only necessary—though anticipating the events of this retrospect—to look at the events of 1840. On that occasion, in a momentous question of European interest, the Turco-Egyptian war, France differed with all the other Great Powers. In the course of negociations, the French Cabinet, which had its own views on Egypt, but agreed with England in opposing Russian influence at Constantinople, thus instructed Admiral Roussin:—'It is very improbable that 'the Sultan should recur to the armed interference of 'Russia before the courier reaches his destination; 'should he do so, however, you ought, in concert with 'Lord Ponsonby, *or even without him, if he refuses to join* '*you*, adopt the measure of an armed intervention' (French). Thus the French Government thought itself at liberty to act singly in the Eastern Question. Late in the year 1840 the other four Great Powers came to a perfect understanding on that question, but France, wishing to make Egypt independent of the Porte, refused to adopt their policy, and they acted without her. M. Thiers told the French Chambers thereupon (as was related before) that he would have made war against all Europe for daring to act in any matter of general interest without the concurrence of France.* Thus M. Thiers considered that while France might act inde-

* See page 145.

pendently of Europe that right was not reciprocal. Such arrogance on the part of an enlightened statesman, like Thiers, can only be accounted for by the fact that in too intently studying the dazzling epoch of the French Empire, he had forgotten the general current of history and the fact that England never at any time took the law from France. With regard to the less eminent Frenchmen who took the same view, their arrogance was due to the really wondrous ignorance of history * which has been observed by foreigners in France. The wretched, incredibly wretched, administration of the British navy † at the time (1835–1839) probably

* The ignorance of geography prevalent in France is proverbial, and incurred the ridicule of the better-taught Germans in the late war. M. Ernest Feydeau, in his amusing but rather spiteful little book, *L'Allemagne en* 1871, says of the Germans, 'S'ils connaissent mieux 'que nous la géographie de la France,' as if it had been the fault of the Germans that French teachers taught no better. But in knowledge of history Frenchmen do not seem much more advanced. As an example taken from a French author, quoted at p. 134, M. A. Laya, who, as a lawyer, and formerly *chef au cabinet du ministre de l'intérieur*, and a politician, might be expected to know something of history: M. Laya tells us, vol. ii. p. 169, that 'le capitaine anglais qui prit Gibraltar 'fit ce haut fait d'armes dans le même temps que le grand Marlborough 'rapportait à Londres les trophées de la Hollande!' and a little later, 'La Hollande n'est plus par elle' (*i. e.* England) 'qu'un trophée et 'qu'un souvenir.' M. Laya, therefore, evidently thinks that 'le grand 'Marlborough' took Holland, and that England still keeps that trophy. It would probably be a surprise to him to learn that Marlborough, so far from taking Holland, was much aided by that country in taking French fortresses, and that his trophies were, besides these, French guns, standards, and prisoners not a few, including a French marshal. Certainly Marlborough deserved to be remembered well, though not gratefully, by Frenchmen.

† In 1834–5 the British Ministry, by way of economy, reduced even the 'peace complements' of our ships of war, and sent them to sea half-manned and the line-of-battle ships half-armed. We were at times almost on the point of a rupture with France, and yet we sent our admirals to distant stations in line-of-battle ships which, being without their lower battery, would have fallen an easy prey to a French frigate!

encouraged the French Cabinet to assume the tone they did.

In looking back, then, at the whole history of this most important political period, what do we really and undeniably find to have been its character?

At the very commencement, 1830, there was upon the side of England the most perfect cordiality, and entire absence of jealousy and suspicion. There was, in fact, no room for the latter feeling. We had then no interests opposed to those of France, and no resentments. The recent Revolution, which had given to France a Parliamentary Monarchy very like our own, established a political sympathy between us, and the gallant contest in Paris by which the French had obtained what we regarded as their legitimate rights won our admiration and good-will. Any one who can consult his own memory upon the crisis will remember that our honest and sincere sympathy was given to our French neighbours, and that on our side there was not the shadow of a reason why the two nations should not become fast friends. Why should there have been? We were on the very best terms with ourselves—a great help towards general benevolence. By sea we considered our position as simply unassailable. The Admiralty (taken as a succession of Boards) had not then muddled away our magnificent position as mistress of the seas, won in a hundred fights. The laurels of the Peninsula and Waterloo were still green upon our soldiers' brows; our influence in Europe was still paramount; and while we were regarded as invulnerable at home, there was an exaggerated idea entertained of what we might, in case of need, do abroad.

As to any jealousy of France, why our very Chauvinism made it impossible! Our good-humoured British Philistine held it as the first article of his creed that we had always beaten the French by sea, and whenever we

set about it in good earnest by land also. As to colonies, France had hardly any but what we gave back to her at the peace; and in our complacency we considered that the French had been very useful to us as enemies by enhancing our reputation in war. In fact, we had no tender point, no defeats to forgive, no loss of territory to regret, no sense of failure in the last war to suggest that we might have better fortune in a fresh contest. We *could* not have mended the peace of 1815.

So far, then, as our own feelings towards France were concerned, they were cordial in the extreme.

But on the French side any such cordiality had been rendered impossible, not so much by the facts of history as by the fictions of French historians and other writers. Ever since Waterloo the Paris press had occupied itself in pourtraying English men and English policy in colours suggested by ill-will, and with that disregard of truth which French authorities tell us is the primary cause of the national decay. If Englishmen had been in the remotest degree like these portraits, no alliance with such monsters would have been possible, and Frenchmen believed in the portraits. The harmless English tourist (only too innocent of any purpose whatever in his travels) was regarded by the average Frenchman as an 'emissary of the infamous Pitt,' bent upon some dire project of injury to France; and, in fact, John Bull, as conceived by our neighbours, did not differ more from the reality than the inhabitants of another planet might do.

There was thus no reciprocity of feeling in the beginning of the alliance, nor, as will be shown, for many years—about a quarter of a century—and bearing this in mind, its history will be more intelligible.

The Anglo-French Alliance may be considered as it existed under the reign of Louis Philippe, from 1830 to 1848, and as it existed under the Second Empire. In

the first period the feelings of the French people were, with a very few honourable exceptions, strongly hostile to England, while the French Government was insincere, and followed a policy of intrigue and chicane which culminated in the underhand plot of the Spanish marriages in 1846.

Under the Second Empire the hostility of the French people had greatly decreased, but was so far kept alive that at times it burst out in full force, especially in 1858–9. The Government, or rather the Emperor, had personally a friendly feeling towards England, and a belief that the Anglo-French Alliance was his true interest. But in his brooding 'Conspirator' mind he seems always to have had an idea that an invasion of England might some day be the policy of France, and so thoroughly had he appreciated the weakness of our Admiralty system that he twice gained an actual superiority of available naval force sufficient to make invasion possible,* and we had then neither army nor militia.

The generation whose adult memory begins with the Crimean war might have been a little surprised to read in *The Times* lately this incidental allusion: 'In the 'reign of Louis Philippe, when hatred to England was 'considered a test of patriotism in France.' They might be still more surprised to hear the assertion that with no people in the world have we been so frequently on the brink of a war, or had so many absolute diplo-

* If any one doubts that fact, his doubts will probably be removed by reading the article on the Navy in the *Quarterly Review*, January, 1873. None who are acquainted with naval affairs will feel any difficulty in assigning the authorship to the man most competent to give correct information as to every ship in our own and in foreign navies. What will probably strike the reader of that article most, will be the *tenacity* with which France, having obtained a superiority in ironclads, was able to maintain it for years! Of course the British public was kept in happy ignorance of what the better system of France could do and had done.

matic ruptures, as with France during the period of our alliance. Both assertions are, however, matter of personal recollection to many, and are as easily established as any facts in history.

One English Minister may be said to have initiated the alliance, watched over its infancy, and been the principal means of preserving it for almost the whole period of its existence. It was his own work, in which he felt a special interest, as being identified with his official life, and no man, living or dead, can be a better authority on its history than that Minister. To mention the name of Lord Palmerston is to tell every Englishman that no better guarantee for truth on any point can be given.

To learn, then, the real nature of our relations with France, under the management of Lord Palmerston, we are now enabled to read his letters to our Ambassador* in Paris, showing each phase of every transaction as it transpired. To any one who turned to that correspondence with the idea that it related to a 'faithful ally' the result would be rather startling. We find that out of the many important international questions upon which we negociated with France between 1830 and 1840, there was not one upon which her Government acted with any approach to straightforwardness or honesty, and that in order to restrain 'our faithful 'ally' from taking unfair advantages contrary to her

* The *Life of Viscount Palmerston*, by Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, 2 vols., may be open to the objection of revealing diplomatic transactions that affect public men still living. At all events it gives the public the advantage of knowing the truth, and its revelations show upon what slippery ground we stood with our 'loyal ally.' See especially vol. ii. pp. 28-9, 30, 35, 37, 39, 41, 49, 52, 53, 56, 66, 69, 74, 92-3, 100, 101-2, 109, 131, 238, 343, 283, 292, 304-5, 310, 311, 318, 321, 323, 327, 328, 334, 336, 338, 342, 345, 351, 359, 364, 365. No reader who has believed in a 'loyal ally' can glance over these passages without a strange revulsion of feeling.

engagements Lord Palmerston had, during that time, to use actual threats of war no less than nine times. This, too, was at the period when the 'Monarchy of 'July,' as it was then called, had no other friend in Europe than England, and our alliance was most valuable to it as a shield against the scarcely restrained ill-will of the Great Powers. But the natural duplicity of the King and the hostile feeling of the people taxed Lord Palmerston's pacific efforts to the uttermost. Several years before the bad faith and chicanery of the French Cabinet culminated in the Spanish marriages—which for a time ended the alliance—we find Lord Palmerston giving vent to his honest indignation in a letter to Lord Granville, dated April 16, 1840:—

'My dear Granville,—

'It has long been quite evident that the French 'Government has been deceiving us about the affairs of 'Buenos Ayres, as they have done about almost every 'other matter in which we have had any communication 'with them—such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, 'Egypt, Persia, and upon all of which their language 'and conduct have been directly at variance. The truth 'is, however reluctantly one may avow the conviction, 'that Louis Philippe is a man in whom no solid trust 'can be reposed. However, there he is, *and we call him* '*our ally;* only we ought to be enlightened by expe- 'rience, and not attach to his assertions and professions 'any greater value than really belongs to them; more 'especially when, as in the case of Egypt, his words are 'not only at variance with his conduct, but even incon- 'sistent with each other. The Cabinet have determined 'that we must without delay bring the French to a 'clear and definite arrangement about their fleet; unless 'they will reduce their ships in commission to ten—the 'number which Soult stated to you in July last—as the

'intended amount of the French active force, we must 'go down to Parliament and ask for an additional vote 'on the express ground of the unexplained armament of 'France. I shall make an official communication to 'you and to Guizot on this matter. Soult and the 'King used to say to you, and Sebastiani used to say to 'me, that they had talked of *fifteen liners* last year as 'their intended number, but looking back to your de-'spatch, I see it was *ten, not fifteen.*'

The French Government, encouraged no doubt by the bad state of our own navy and the inability of the Admiralty to man a few extra ships, had accumulated a very superior force in the Mediterranean. The French Admiral * a little later urged his Government to strike a blow at our fleet (without any declaration of war), and a period of really dangerous suspense was terminated by the removal of M. Thiers from office.

The extracts given (and many similar might be added) show that the French Government at least had peculiar notions of fidelity to an ally. The very next page (in Lord Dalling's *Life of Lord Palmerston*) shows that the French press, the French Chamber, and the French people were not at all behind their Government in the desire to overreach. Lord Palmerston writes again to Lord Granville, April 23, 1840:—

'My dear Granville,—

'What you say of *the French in general* is very 'true; there is no trusting them, and they are always 'acting a double part. I am afraid, however, that their

* Admiral Lalande, who then commanded what was, in the opinion of French naval officers, the most efficient fleet France ever possessed. The British Admiralty had of course by this time given up the system of half-manned and half-armed ships, and our fleet was recovering from the inefficient state to which 'able administrators' had reduced it for seven years.

'double-dealing at present is not to be ascribed solely 'to weakness and timidity.' (Lord Dalling adds a note: 'Lord Granville pointed out to Lord Palmerston 'that there was a good deal of difference between insin- 'cerity proceeding from ill-will and insincerity proceeding 'from feebleness and timidity. The King does not want 'to quarrel with us, he said, but neither does he 'want to quarrel with the French Chamber. He has 'fixed no greedy eyes upon Egypt, but he does not wish 'to quarrel with those who have;' and this was per- fectly true, but Palmerston said, 'I can't enter into 'motives, I must look to acts, and if a reputed friend 'will not act as a friend, I must consider he is not 'one.') Lord Palmerston continues his letter: 'The 'truth is, that Louis Philippe is the prime mover of 'the foreign relations of France, and one must admit 'in one's own mind that if he had been a very straight- 'forward, scrupulous, and high-minded man, he would 'not have been sitting on the French throne.'

Such are the estimates formed by Lord Palmerston and by Earl Granville (than whom no one understood the French people better) of our 'faithful ally' at a most critical period of English history. Happily we found safer allies for the crisis. To the young and the middle-aged the events of 1840 may look like a very old tale, but then the Prime Minister of France in 1840 is the President of the present day, and the man who more than any other has moulded the minds of the living generation. No Frenchman holding the belief taught by the Napoleonic legend could be well disposed to England.

The *Life of Lord Palmerston* has not, unhappily, been continued beyond 1840, but those whose memories extend to that date will remember that the 'uprightness' of the French Government did not improve, and that the hostility of our ally was greatly increased by the rebuff

which his Egyptian policy had met with. In 1844 we were nearly at war about Tahiti, where the French commanding officer had acted with brutality to the English Consul, and turned him out of the island. Lord Aberdeen had informed the French Chargé-d'Affaires in London that the Consul would be sent back in an English line-of-battle ship, but on being told that France would consider such an act as a declaration of war, the British Cabinet yielded. At that period the French fleet was in a very efficient state, and its officers, including a Royal Prince (Joinville), were very anxious for a collision with our own. In fact, from 1840 to 1846 the feelings of our ally towards us were most cordially hostile, demanding no little forbearance and management on the part of Lord Palmerston and his successor.

In 1846 the Spanish marriages may be said to have terminated our alliance with France for some years. If Lord Palmerston had ceased to believe in the honesty of our ally six years before, it would be interesting to have his sentiments on that crowning act of bad faith. We know, however, the verdict of Europe upon a breach of faith which powerfully conduced to the fall of the Monarchy in 1848, unpitied, distrusted, and contemned.*

Did M. Thiers, in reminding our Government (in 1870) of 'the alliance of forty years between the two 'countries,' mean to include the eighteen years of the reign of Louis Philippe as laying us under deep obligations? If so he certainly could not cite Lord Palmerston in evidence of French loyalty, and he would hardly cite the M. Thiers of 1840, whose loyalty to the alliance very nearly set Europe in flames.

* In the recently published *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar*, that quiet and privileged observer speaks of the Spanish marriages as destroying every vestige of belief in the good faith of Louis Philippe and hastening his fall.

The Anglo-French Alliance can hardly be said to have subsisted from 1846 to the termination of the French Republic in December, 1851. The adventurers raised to power by the Revolution of 1848 were too little known or trusted to admit of any cordial relations. They made a very unprincipled attempt to seize upon Belgium by sending a gang of ruffians to excite an insurrection, and it was believed that they had their agents in London. In any case the chaotic revolutionary state of France repelled rather than invited alliances.

With the establishment of the Empire our relations with France entered into a new and more satisfactory phase. Prince Louis Napoleon had been long resident in England, had received hospitality, studied our institutions (and our weakness too), and was struck by the fact that revolution, triumphant in so many countries, was, without any bloodshed, restrained in London. Like his uncle he hated revolutions and revolutionists, and probably felt that England, with her stable institutions, might be a useful ally to his newly-established throne.* Our speedy recognition of his Government must have confirmed such feelings, and Napoleon III. decided upon the English alliance, but with the resolution to be always prepared for a seasonable rupture. He lavished immense sums in completing the naval port of Cherbourg, a work which had transcended the powers of his uncle to accomplish, and thus obtained a vantage ground for any hostile expedition. He engaged M. Dupuy de Lome, the best naval architect of his day, to reconstruct the French fleet, and while our Admiralty were hatching failure after failure, France launched the first and finest of steam line-of-battle ships, the *Napoléon*,

* Among all the false colourings by which M. Thiers sought to render the memory of the First Napoleon popular, the worst is representing him as the 'champion of the Revolution.' The Communists in 1871 knew better when they pulled down his statue.

of 100 guns. In a short time the French navy, counting steam-propelled ships only, equalled our own, and England had one of her usual 'panics.' The Emperor Napoleon, however, had no intention of attacking us; he only desired the *power* of doing so, and that power the imbecility of our Admiralty system ensured him. The political relations of the two countries were not cordial until the Crimean War, when, perhaps for the first time, the alliance was a *reality*.

There can, however, be no greater error in fact or theory than the French idea that the war was a 'generous sacrifice made by France' for the benefit of England. As a fact, France is more interested than England in keeping Russia out of Constantinople. To talk of Constantinople being in any sense the 'key of 'India' is arrant nonsense; and as to Egypt, it has always been more likely to fall into French than Russian hands. England does not intend to let Russia occupy Egypt if it can be prevented, neither does France. It was France, not Russia, that used to aim at making the Mediterranean 'a French lake,' and, therefore, France, more than England, should disapprove of Russia establishing herself there. So far as to the facts; but even in theory it would have been absurd in France to make war for an English interest, and the Emperor had too much sense to do so. He invited England to join France against Russia, primarily, as every one knows, on account of the French quarrel with that Power about the keys of the Holy Sepulchre; and secondly, and very legitimately, because France and England were both interested in defending Turkey. Thus the co-operation of the two Powers rested on the only proper basis, a common interest, and neither could claim the gratitude of the other. In the war which ensued the French proved themselves gallant and efficient allies, as might have been expected, but to speak of their sacrificing themselves

to save our army at Inkermann is a total misconception. *Not* to have supported the position attacked would have been to sacrifice themselves, as the two armies were, in truth, but one, and the defeat of one would have involved the defeat of the other. The French army owed just as much to the English for maintaining their ground against superior forces as the English did to the French for their timely support. At the conclusion the Emperor made peace, when it suited his own purpose, without regard to the wishes of his ally; but that was, perhaps, excusable, though proving that he did not imagine he was fighting for *us*.

The cordiality which marked the commencement of the Crimean War did not outlast it, and, while our military reputation on the Continent was rather lowered by it, our allies somewhat unduly exalted themselves * and depreciated our soldiers. The feeling was pretty general among our officers that there was a want of generosity on the part of our friends.

Three years later the Indian Mutiny gave the Emperor Napoleon an opportunity, which he did not neglect, of acting as a good ally. England did not indeed accept his friendly offers, not thinking it necessary, yet they were not the less well-meant. But when M. Thiers based a claim to British assistance during the late war on the 'loyalty of our conduct during the Indian war,' † one suspects that in his view the natural course for France would have been to seize the opportunity for injuring us.

Popular feeling in France was not, however, friendly

* All who have read the French accounts of the war, including the official, or seen the paintings of the battles, must have noticed that the British are 'conspicuous by their absence.'

† Despatch from M. Thiers to M. Jules Favre, dated London, September 13, 1870, quoted by the latter, *Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale*, p. 137.

to England at the time of the Mutiny, and there is reason to think that the speedy triumph of our arms was as little welcome as it was expected by our allies. In 1858, it will be remembered, France was much agitated by the refusal of England to alter her law as to the French conspirators in London, and certain 'French 'colonels' volunteered (their offer being published in the official *Moniteur*) to 'tear the assassins from their den' (England). Napoleon III., it must in candour be admitted, had some cause to be indignant, after narrowly escaping the attempt on his life; but the indignation of his subjects was at least as much prompted by the old grudge against England as by any exuberance of loyalty. In fact, 1858 was the period of the *third* of the 'Three 'Panics' described in Mr. Cobden's clever pamphlet, all caused by the naval activity of our 'faithful ally.' As such activity led to some memorable speeches in both Houses, to a very great increase of our navy, to a vote of many millions for fortifications at Portsmouth and elsewhere, to the creation of our Volunteer force, and other precautions, we cannot accept Mr. Cobden's assurance that there was no cause for alarm. It was his '*idée fixe*' that no country had any warlike and aggressive propensities except England, due probably to the wicked Wellingtonian legend of conquest; but on looking back to the pamphlet literature of France at this time, we shall find enough proof of anti-English rancour to make the thing intelligible. Nor among the elements of substantial danger must our British Admiralty be forgotten, a department which might inspire panic anywhere except among our enemies. The explanation of the alarm that unquestionably prevailed relative to a French invasion lies in a nutshell. We had ships enough, or the means of building any number, and we had sailors more than enough; but from the time that impressment became impossible we never have had, nor

apparently shall have, an Admiralty capable of manning our fleet for any great emergency. As the French had solved the problem for themselves, it followed—and was admitted in Parliament by the First Lord of the Admiralty—that our neighbours could man their fleet when wanted, and we could man ours a few months or years after it was wanted.

Though pamphlets usually attract and deserve but little attention, there used to be under the Empire a class of writers supposed to be 'inspired' by the Government, and some of these may be taken to show the animus—certainly of the writers, and very possibly of the Emperor. Nothing could have been more venomously hostile to England than some of these pamphlets, and nothing more certain than that the feelings which dictated them would have rendered an invasion of England the most popular enterprise which the ex-Emperor could have undertaken. To many, perhaps most, Englishmen this is all mere matter of fact, well known and remembered. To a younger generation, which cannot recall the facts of the 'Three Panics,' it might cause surprise to read the speeches of Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Howden, Mr. Horsman, Sir C. Napier, &c., and to know they referred not to Russia as a neutral, but to a (supposed loyal) ally. As a practical question, all such controversy has lost its interest now; it must be many years before France can again devote her resources to naval rivalry with England, as she has work enough nearer home and at home. But in order fairly to appreciate France as an ally, we ought to study her history in alliance with us, and see how far—not as a phrase, but as a fact—she was loyal to us. If we find that her press virulently abused us upon the smallest provocation, and sometimes without any; that her people hated us, and her Government put us to immense expense in preparing against attacks, we must conclude that there

was no real alliance between us. Upon the actual feelings of the French population towards England Lord Howden, speaking as one with peculiar opportunities of knowing, thus expressed himself, premising that 'he 'resided in France, and his social relations were chiefly in 'that country. . . . He did not believe that the 'idea of *conquering* this country had ever entered into 'the head of any sane Frenchman, any more than any 'sane Englishman had ever entertained the notion that 'we should allow ourselves to be conquered by France. 'He felt assured that no Frenchman had ever dreamt 'of taking possession of this island; but he felt almost 'equally certain that every Frenchman living dreamt, 'both by day and by night, of humiliating this country, 'and robbing her of the position which she alone main-'tained among the nations of Europe of possessing an 'inviolate soil. . . .' After saying that war with England would unite in one body Republicans, Imperial-ists, Orleanists, and Legitimists, he added, 'Such a war 'was the only one which would ever be universally 'popular in France; and however reckless the attempt 'on England might be, however devoid of all rational 'hope of success, there was not a single widow in 'France who would not give her last son, or a single 'beggar that would not give his last penny, to carry out 'such a project.' Nothing could be more cordial certainly than the hatred here described.

Lord Howden, though so well entitled to be considered an authority, spoke as an individual. Statesmen in office could not, of course, dwell upon the bad feelings of a nation in alliance, but as to the preparations needed against that same nation the Prime Minister used no concealments. After asking a vote for the required fortifications (9,000,000*l.*), he proceeded: 'Now, sir, 'as to the necessity of these works, I think it is impos-'sible for any man to cast his eyes over Europe, and to

'see and hear what is passing, without being convinced 'that the future is not free from danger. It is difficult 'to say where the storm may burst, but the horizon is 'charged with clouds, which betoken the possibility of 'a tempest. The Committee, of course, know that I 'am speaking in the main of *our immediate neighbour* '*across the Channel*, and there is no use in disguising 'it.'* Mr. Sidney Herbert, Minister of War, spoke in the same sense a few days later (Aug. 2):—

'Is it not a fact, I ask him, that the whole nation 'is full of alarm and suspicion? The people feel that 'they ought to obtain security at any price. We have, 'therefore, spent a large sum in putting our stores and 'munitions of war in order. We have an increase of 'the army; not a large increase, it is true, but still an 'increase. All these things are cheerfully borne by the 'public, and more is called for—more, perhaps, than 'the Government are willing to do. Is not that an 'indication that there must in the minds of the immense 'majority of the people be some cause for alarm? The 'country feels that it is not in a proper state of defence, 'and that, if we would deal with the question at all, we 'should deal with the whole of it if we can. Such, I 'believe, are the feelings which animate the people out 'of doors.'

But was this period, when Ministers gave expression, not only in words but in act, to the national feelings of suspicion, a mere passing coolness, a momentary misunderstanding with our ally? Far from it; the bad blood which existed in 1860 was no less matter of discussion upon both sides of the Channel in 1858 and 1859. It is not easy now to find the French pamphlets of those years, but two happen to offer themselves, and may be taken as fair expressions of the better and the worse phases of the anti-English feeling in France at the

* Hansard, clx. 21; Lord Palmerston, July 23, 1860.

time. The first is entitled *Aurons-nous la Guerre avec l'Angleterre?* * and is written by S. Médoros, a fanatical Napoleonist and a Chauvinist *à outrance*. Though written to flatter the Emperor, and professing to know his thoughts, we can hardly believe that it was 'inspired,' as was asserted. It is venomous, vulgar, and offensive.

M. Médoros, after an exordium intended to be philosophical about 'a great historical event which is impending,' asks the question, 'Shall we have war with England? Traditions, national hatreds, hopes of vengeance, wounds still bleeding, will all be excited by this question, which we are about to discuss. We cannot be accused of trying to increase the extreme distrust which prevails between the two nations, for already anxiety has reached fever-heat, especially in England. There this question, which certain organs of the press have envenomed with ill-disguised rage, is examined, commented on, and explained.' 'To-day all Europe persists in believing that Napoleon III. is preparing one of those great deeds which astonish the world. . . . .' Then follows some fulsome adulation of the Emperor, 'whose genius all Europe is acquainted with, never having ceased to watch him from the cradle.' After which: 'But what is the secret thought which Europe imputes to the Emperor? In spite of the treaty of alliance, in spite of official manifestations, and even the embrace of Osborne, repeated at Cherbourg, intelligent Europe knows that all affection is impossible between France and England; that Napoleon III. may be the *ally, but not the friend* of England. A duel seems to be declared between the Empire and the Court of St. James'.' The pamphlet then indulges in some of the spite against England and

* *Aurons-nous la Guerre avec l'Angleterre?* par S. Médoros. Paris, 1858.

the vulgar abuse common under the First Empire, which, though very contemptible, and not to be taken as expressing the sentiments of French gentlemen, is probably a fair expression of popular feeling.

Another pamphlet, but very superior in its tone and character, takes the opposite side, as to the expediency of invading England. It is entitled, *Recherches sur les forces maritimes, marins et hommes de mer dans la guerre d'Orient, suivies de quelques mots sur les conditions d'une lutte avec l'Angleterre.** It is anonymous; but, from the knowledge it displays of the personal and professional character of the superior officers of the French navy, it is clearly written by a naval officer of rank. The writing is good, and the sentiments as superior to those of M. Médoros as a gentleman is superior to a clown. The author is capable of appreciating conduct and skill even in an Englishman, and, though evidently actuated by the national jealousy so universal in France, he does not come to the conclusion that an attack on England—*much as he admits that Frenchmen desire it*—would succeed. The opinions of a French naval officer, who has closely studied the character of Englishmen when engaged in war, and who is evidently above the mean envy and detraction so common among our neighbours, is well worthy of attention. He is proud of his countrymen and of the French navy, to which Englishmen—not the least from jealousy or ill-will, however—rarely do justice; but he thinks that the hatred of England (which he confesses to sharing) may end in a catastrophe for France. In his *Réflexions à propos d'une lutte possible avec l'Angleterre*, p. 136, he says:—'History attentively 'studied shows this in every page. It is plain to us, 'that hatred of England, which we all find in the 'depths of our hearts, by revealing to us in every age 'the form of England standing, like the statue of the

* Dentu: Paris, 1859.

'Commander,* ever before our eyes, ever watching our 'errors, sealing our humiliations, and contrasting the 'robust traditions of her civil life with our pitiable weak-'nesses . . . . Such is the conduct which we choose to 'call perfidy among our neighbours, and which causes 'the rumour of hostilities to find an echo in France the 'loudness of which cannot be denied. At this moment 'especially, when the question occupies every mind, it 'is only necessary to open one's ears to know that, 'whatever be the hopes of success which each person 'entertains, all regard the prospect with satisfaction.'

The two pamphlets quoted—one dated in 1858, the other in 1859—are two which happen to remain at hand out of a very large number to the same effect. But the acts of the French Government during the so-called alliance were not less expressive of jealousy, ill-will, and desire to acquire the power of injuring England. Upon all our principal lines of communication † with our Colonies, France followed a settled policy of establishing naval stations, and wherever an object of French policy diametrically opposed to British interests could be promoted there were no scruples about doing so. Were the positions of England and France reversed in India, and that vast peninsula a French instead of an English possession, we could not have done what France has without a serious misunderstanding. Of late years England has perhaps wisely renounced all such jealousy.

Before mentioning other instances of what may be called a hostile policy towards us, it is right to do the fullest justice to friendly acts of the late Emperor. As already said, he showed good-will towards England in

* The equestrian statue in Don Giovanni.

† In the Mozambique Channel, the Red Sea, in New Caledonia, in Martin Garcia, but, above all, the efforts of France were turned towards acquiring influence in Egypt.

the case of the Indian Mutiny; better will than his subjects, better, we may fairly believe, than M. Thiers would have shown. But in the case of our threatened rupture with the United States in the 'Trent affair,' Napoleon III. went out of his way to declare his conviction that we were right, and this opportune declaration may have assisted in averting a war. Unquestionably England was right, as the United States have admitted, and no doubt the ex-Emperor's feelings, as he showed later, were unfavourable to the United States, of whose ever-growing power he was jealous; but still he acted the part of a good friend to England in the matter, which should not be forgotten. But the really important question, both historically and politically, is how to reconcile those good offices with an apparent intention to prepare for hostilities against us. Were enormous sums expended upon Cherbourg and upon naval rivalry with England—sums which, expended upon the Eastern frontier and upon the army, might have saved France—spent with an object, and if so with what object? Was the hatred to England, which was stimulated in the French army and navy and the population generally by official and semi-official writings and speeches, with an object, and if so with what object?

And if it be considered that an expenditure of perhaps 100 millions would not have been made without an object, and that a navy nearly equal to our own would have been a mere superfluity for France, if she had no 'arrière pensée' of attacking England, the difficulty arises that the ex-Emperor let the most favourable opportunities of aggression pass unimproved.

The explanation seems to be this: In the beginning of his rule the Prince-President and Emperor knew that England had *no* land forces,* and a fleet that could

* It may seem incredible to the young generation, who now have heard our forces estimated by hundreds of thousands, that in 1848

never be manned or got ready in time for any emergency. He found his people intensely hostile to England, and could not reckon upon the durability of his own power and popularity. Under these circumstances he resolved to acquire a position in which, should a sudden rupture with England appear likely to strengthen his authority at home, there would be a fair chance of success. This position he actually attained by a large expenditure—and the aid of Admiralty imbecility in England—but, with the vacillation which marked his character, he hesitated between the policy of alliance or war. On the whole, events ranged themselves on the side of peace, and having no personal enmity, but the contrary, towards England, he was content to take the leading part for France, assigning a secondary part to his ally and effecting his object without incurring the risks of war. It is probable, moreover, that the dream of the left bank of the Rhine and annexation of Belgium had always a place in his secret meditations, and that he knew they involved the probability of war with England. We now know that in 1866 or 1867 the project of annexing Belgium and stipulating for aid against his English ally took a definite form, but it is impossible to say how early it originated in a mind so habituated to conspiracy. Most men have their dreamy programmes of life—hardly avowed to themselves, perhaps—and it is inherently probable that Napoleon III. had a Napoleonic programme, involving the destruction of the Treaties of 1815, of which he had avowed his detestation in 1866. If that were so, a collision with England sooner or later must have entered into his calculations as a thing to provide

(after many threatened ruptures with our 'ally') England had no army at home except, as the Duke of Wellington said, a field force of 5,000 men, no reserve, no militia, and no volunteers. Still more, perhaps, that to man our fleet the Admiralty counted upon impressment, which was as dead as Queen Anne.

against, and it is singular how near realization such a programme seemed to be. In 1852, the important article by which the Allied Powers had excluded the Bonaparte family from the throne of France was daringly violated. It is true that the continental sovereigns in their hatred of a democratic Republic were too glad to see France under the strong rule of an autocrat, albeit a Bonaparte; but while content to give France a master, they did not mean to receive one from her, nor could they be compelled to do so until the four Great Powers, who humbled her in 1815, should have been humbled in their turn. But Russia was humbled in the Crimea, Austria in Italy, and Prussia was to have been humbled in 1870. Had she been so, as all France expected, can it be doubted that England would have had to choose between a new reign of Napoleonic wrong and aggression or a war? It is, as has been said, inherently probable that such schemes were revolved in the brooding mind of the ex-Emperor, because Napoleonism was his *raison d'être*, and the army at least, which he had pampered and flattered, expected him to follow the bad example of his uncle. Yet personally no two characters could differ more than the two Napoleons, and had the ex-Emperor consulted his personal feelings only, uninfluenced by the Napoleonic Legend and the hostile feelings of his subjects towards England, he might have proved a more trustworthy ally. As it was, in pursuit of that phantom of European domination which brought such punishment upon his uncle and upon France, he plotted against his ally in the matter of Belgium, and thereby lost all claim to confidence or respect.

As no amount of good deeds could obliterate a fraudulent and dishonest act in a private individual, so —still more, perhaps—the cases where the ex-Emperor acted well as an ally cannot be balanced against this treachery. The facts established—and none were ever

more clearly brought home to the perpetrator than the Benedetti plot—the alliance was, morally, at least, ended. The appeal made by M. Thiers in London to the 'loyalty' and gratitude * of England was singularly ill-imagined, and involved a misconception as to where, if anywhere, gratitude would have been due. For, as every one knows, Napoleon III. was his own adviser in foreign policy, and our gratitude would have been due to the dethroned monarch, not to those who dethroned him. If it be pleaded, as it fairly may, that the French people, not having had any share in managing their own affairs, cannot be blamed for the Belgian plot, the plea may be admitted; but on the same ground they must be held to have had no share in any policy *favourable* to England. Indeed, to the Emperor alone, who sustained the alliance, which was always distasteful, and at times odious to his people, was any gratitude due from England.

If we would seek the reasons of this ill-will, which has not been by any means reciprocated, it is to be found, firstly, in the persistent misrepresentations of French historians and others who, from the time of the First Empire, have gratified their feelings by vilifying England. Secondly, in a jealousy and want of *generosity* in the French character, the last defect they would suspect in themselves, and one respecting which Englishmen have been misled by an alliterative 'phrase.' The English people, whatever their defects, are not given to detraction; they are, perhaps, rather fond of praising their friends, and have always given full credit to France

* From the numerous occasions when the naval forces of England and France co-operated, some people may imagine that we required and asked for French assistance. Thank Heaven! what can be done by ships we can do without French aid. It suited France for obvious reasons to interfere in China and Japan, but we did not want her help.

for her good qualities. An Englishman says with heartiness of the French that they are 'a great and 'gallant nation,' which they certainly are, even in their fall. But a triplet being wanted, and the word 'gene-'rous' beginning with a *g*, we added it to 'great and 'gallant,' and had a good triad of virtues which seemed to go well together in 'great, gallant, and *generous*.' Had 'glory-loving' been English, it would have been strictly true of the French, or had we taken 'genea-'logical,' it would have served the purpose of alliteration, though making nonsense, but we took 'generous' as complimentary, without examining how far it applied. But *are* the French as a nation 'generous,' and if so, in what do they show it? Is it in the generous consideration shown to an Emperor and other of their own leaders in the day of their misfortunes? Is it in acknowledging the merits of a conqueror, even when they are themselves the vanquished? Is it in doing justice to a rival whom they dislike? Is it in their superiority to petty jealousy, envy, and slander? Is it in their histories? Is it in their foreign policy?

When the First Napoleon—whom it became the fashion to idolize some years after his death—was defeated and dethroned, he met with insult, execration, and threats, which made his first departure from France anything but safe or pleasant. When the Second Napoleon succumbed at Sedan, no insult was spared to his name and dignity. Each general who failed in the last war—as all did—was accused of treason, when nothing whatever was known but his defeat.

It was the fortune of England, with the timely aid of Prussia, to fight and win that great battle which gave Europe forty years of repose. The English General was not a novice, having fought and beaten most of Napoleon's Marshals on many well-fought fields. Yet no French writer has ever acknowledged that the General and his

army had any merit, or that the victory was due to more than some accident. In the same manner M. Thiers, who has been called 'the national historian of France,' has described the battle of Trafalgar. About Nelson's merits one would imagine there were not two opinions, and as he paid for victory with his life, generosity might have at least given his last memorable signal. Thiers suppresses it,* though he has evidently studied the English accounts, and devotes many pages to prove that if victory belonged to the English, the merit belonged to the French. In all M. Thiers' voluminous history, it would be vain to look for a single instance of justice done to a foreign victor of France. That England was for forty years after Waterloo the subject of French calumny every one knows.

But to take a case where generosity would certainly have enlisted French sympathy on the side of England—the perfectly disinterested and humane efforts which England made for so many years to suppress the slave-trade. If anything could be ungenerous and unworthy, it was the popular feeling and conduct of France upon this point.

No man whose common sense was uninfluenced by national jealousy would misconceive the motives of England in emancipating all her slaves at a sacrifice of twenty millions sterling and to the serious detriment of her colonies. Yet grave French writers set themselves to prove, and did convince their countrymen, that philanthropy had nothing to do with it, but England emancipated her own negroes, hoping to excite insurrection among the slaves in the French Colonies! The country whose 'colonies and dependencies embrace about one-'third of the globe, and nearly a fourth of its popula-

* Thiers suppressed Nelson's 'England expects,' &c., but the French Admiral Hamelin paraphrased it at Sebastopol.

'tion,'* solely actuated by jealousy of the few little sugar islands still owned by France! Could any 'generous' nation invent or believe so paltry a fiction?

It was the same with the British efforts to suppress the slave-trade on the coast of Africa. After Lord Palmerston had obtained a treaty from France designed to prevent the abuse of the French flag to cover slavers, it became necessary to renounce the treaty right. Our allies were persuaded by their public writers and statesmen that England cared nothing for humanity, but hoped to benefit her trade by obstructing that of France! Would not a 'generous' nation have understood us better, and been above such mean jealousy?

It is not as depreciating France, but as explaining what would otherwise be inexplicable, that it is necessary to point out this defect in the French character. Had France been 'generous' the Anglo-French Alliance would have been as sincere on her part as it was on ours. From want of generosity she never forgave us for defeating her, nor ceased to suspect, misrepresent, and hate us. The alliance under Louis Philippe struggled on against his insincerity and deception for sixteen years, to be ended by a signal act of bad faith in the Spanish marriages. The renewed alliance under the Emperor struggled on for about the same time, to be terminated by an even worse breach of faith in the Benedetti plot. This retrospect would not be complete without allusion to a French undertaking, regarding which there has been much misunderstanding and not a little intentional misrepresentation:—the French operation of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez.

* *The Statesman's Year-Book*, 1871, p. 278. Of course the slave colonies of England form but a small fraction of our vast Colonial Empire, but they were so much larger and more valuable than those of France as to make the very idea of our sacrificing our own colonies to injure hers ridiculous.

Our neighbours have from time to time reproached England with a narrow-minded selfishness in opposing the project, as she certainly did for many years, and, in fact, as long as English influence was predominant in Turkey. But Lord Palmerston, the steady supporter of that policy, was neither an ignorant nor narrow-minded statesman. No man understood English interests or French aspirations better, nor are his reasons far to seek.

As a commercial question, Lord Palmerston knew perfectly well that if any nation benefited by the proposed Canal it would be England. But as a military question, he knew—as any man capable of understanding a map must know—that it placed a possible enemy between England and her vast empire in the East, greatly endangering her communications therewith.

If Englishmen, however, had overlooked, or failed to understand so palpable a truth, our martial and military neighbours assuredly did not. Nor did they leave us any excuse for blindness. In the Suez Canal they saw, indeed, a commercial advantage to France in peace, but still more clearly did they see how it might be turned against England in war. They would not have been Frenchmen if they had not.

No geographical fact was more apparent to the eye, than that a military expedition leaving Toulon for India *viâ* the Suez Canal, would arrive there many days before a British expedition starting from Portsmouth. So far the Canal was an undeniable danger to our most important possessions, and from this point of view M. Lesseps (a man well known for his strong anti-English feelings) saw the question. More than half the popularity of the project in France arose from the belief that it would injure England still more than it would benefit France.

Those who recollect the French pamphlets, newspaper articles, and speeches at the time will remember

how bitterly 'perfide Albion' was assailed in connection with the Canal. But the project was not, as originally conceived, confined to a canal. There was a wide strip of territory acquired by the French Company, a privilege which would in war have greatly facilitated a military occupation of the adjoining country by a French force. So well did Lord Palmerston understand all that was exciting the zeal of our ally that he had constantly to watch these encroachments. The known want of efficient organization in our naval department, however, and our Crimean shortcomings, had lessened our influence with the Porte and proportionately increased that of France. A concession of dangerous latitude was actually acquired by M. Lesseps, or rather for him, through the pressure of French diplomacy at the Porte. The rights acquired by the French Company were virtually acquired by the Government, at that time all-powerful and ready to maintain them against any interferences whether Turkish or foreign. Egypt was inundated by French engineers, labourers, tradesmen, and their attendants; nothing was seen or heard there that was not French. Unquestionably it was a triumph for their diplomacy, a check for our own.

To estimate the diplomatic and military importance of the facts, let the English reader only suppose that instead of France Russia had done this! That RUSSIA, our *bête noire* (established, to make the case parallel, in the *Mediterranean*), had acquired a large concession of Egyptian territory with two sea-ports, one in each sea. Would there not have been a furious outcry in England, and would not people have said, 'To what purpose did we 'protect Turkey in Europe from Russia if she is thus to 'establish herself a thousand miles nearer India and 'upon the direct line of our communication?"

But it was France, our 'loyal ally,' and not Russia, whose flag was seen flying in Egypt on the new high-road to India, so we acquiesced.

It is an amusing illustration of the singular misconception prevalent as to the real danger to our Indian Empire. We have with laudable vigilance watched over and secured the upper windows and skylights of our Indian house, but the doors we left open. We kept our eyes steadily fixed on Constantinople; we shut them to Egypt. Yet history tells us that the greatest of modern commanders *did* take a French army to Egypt to menace us in India, and common sense *might* tell us that if ever Russia attacks us in India it will *not* be *viâ* Constantinople or any part of Turkey, but by the route through Central Asia. On that route, as Russia has nothing to fear from Turkey, she will not gratuitously provoke her enmity by an attack on any part of the Ottoman dominions—if India be her object.

To return to the Suez Canal: the most objectionable conditions of the Charter obtained by the French Company have been annulled or modified, and M. Lesseps has probably discovered that any hope of a Napoleonic expedition from Toulon to Egypt (*en route* to India) must be indefinitely postponed. Meanwhile, his canal, if not profitable to the patriotic projectors, is very useful to British commerce, which benefits more by it than united Europe.

Of course it will be the duty of England henceforth to regard this new route as her military communication with India, and to take good care that should the northern terminus of the Red Sea—Egypt—fall into hostile hands, the southern terminus—the neck of the bottle—should be in British keeping. For the mistress of India this is a necessity, and though the occupation of Perim—a minute island in the Straits of Babel-Mandeb, where we built a lighthouse,—gave infinite umbrage to France some years since, prudence now requires us to do more in the way of precaution.

Such is a faithful sketch of the forty years which

young people, or old people with short memories, or diplomatists with convenient ones, may imagine passed in unbroken cordiality and alliance between England and France. Of about four or five years out of the forty that might be nearly true.

What, then, is the conclusion from that fact? That France can never be a good ally for England? God forbid! A Napoleonic France, impregnated with the detestable and immoral maxims of the First Empire, cannot be a faithful ally to any country, but let us hope that Napoleonism is dead, and that a better, nobler, more generous France survives.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROSPECTS OF A NEW ANGLO-FRENCH ALLIANCE.

It is assumed in the heading of this chapter that the Alliance, or rather diplomatic co-operation, between England and France was virtually terminated in 1870. For the credit of international policy and the honour of England, it is to be hoped, at least, that such is the understanding. Agreements between nations, like other contracts, must recognize the principle that their breach by one party sets the other party free. No contract is held to be more binding than marriage, yet there even the proved infidelity of the wife releases the husband. The secret negociations of the French Government for an alliance against England was a similar unfaithfulness to a former ally. Most French writers attach little importance to the circumstance, which is natural, but unless Englishmen are prepared to admit that their allies are at liberty to betray them, they cannot make light of the matter. We are under onerous engagements to Turkey: were the Turkish Government to conspire secretly with Russia, negociating a treaty offensive and defensive with her, we should be released from these obligations. The case of the Benedetti plot is very similar, and only requires us to suppose that Russia, breaking off the negociation and quarrelling with Turkey, publishes the secret treaty. The Turkish Minister denies its authenticity; the Russian Government produces the original draft in the handwriting of the Turkish Minister, who

shuffles, attempts excuses, and is finally convicted in the face of the world.

It has been shown, in the last chapter, that as a mere matter of history, the Anglo-French Alliance was not popular in France, that the feelings of the French people were generally hostile to England, and that during the assumed existence of the alliance we were often on the verge of a war with our ally. In short, that if the alliance was preserved at all, it was preserved with difficulty and at the cost of considerable forbearance and even sacrifice upon the part of England.

Would a new Anglo-French Alliance be more real or less exposed to vicissitudes and failure in its operation? Would it accord with English interests and political principles? Would it be really popular in France?

Without knowing the future policy of France, which it would be harder to predict than that of any other nation, it would be impossible to form any definite opinion on the subject. Yet we may know that of two general lines of policy, between which France must choose, there is one with which England could, another with which she could not, associate herself. With France pacific, and resolved to eschew the Napoleonic policy of imposing her will upon Europe, we may honourably ally ourselves. With France bent upon war or revenge, England cannot associate herself; nay, further, from such a France it is her duty to dissociate herself, not only when war should break out, but when a war policy is known to govern French counsels. If England would avoid all suspicions of complicity with such views—and she is doubly bound to do so after the aberrations of public opinion in 1870-71—her neutrality should not commence only when her ally becomes a belligerent. A man desirous of showing his disapproval of duelling—a clergyman, for example—would not be seen walking daily arm-in-arm with a notorious duellist,

satisfied with not acting the part of second in the field. England might withdraw from an alliance with France at the moment she declared war against Prussia, and yet have incurred the suspicion, the ill-will, or perhaps even hostility, of the latter. This will appear obvious if we consider the acts and language, whether official or otherwise, which would be likely to precede a war already decided upon.

Supposing, as is to be hoped, that no English Government would think of abetting France in a meditated war of revenge, it would be unpardonable folly to incur ill-will for a suspected belligerency which we never contemplated, and lose the benefit of a neutrality on which we had determined. But a close alliance with France at a time when she was preparing for a war in which we were not going to join her would be unjust and injurious to others as well as ourselves, and would conduce to alliances detrimental to the general interests. However pacific our intentions, the French Government press would be sure to give that colour to the alliance which suited French interests, and France, ever ready to believe what she desires, would, to a greater or lesser extent, come to rely on our aid at the crisis. Such a belief might decide her counsels and conduce to her ruin. Germany, seeing France and England in alliance, might seek to strengthen herself by an alliance with Russia, to be purchased by concessions easily imagined, and thus, without benefiting France, we might incur ill-will and promote a hostile policy elsewhere.

But does this legitimate ground of alliance, this community of interests, this 'eadem velle atque nolle' exist between France and England? Does the same political idea influence both? If so, there are good reasons for an alliance, but then we should know what will be the objects and policy of a Government which, as yet, is merely accidental or provisional, and may be succeeded

to-morrow by a totally different Government with an opposite policy, to give way immediately after to a new rule, the nature and character of which we cannot even conjecture.

Assuming, however, that the 'Republic of M. Thiers' (or personal government, substituting President for Emperor,) should endure for a time, the world knows his principles of foreign policy, and they are not such as England can approve. The inventor of the Napoleonic Legend has clear, intelligible, definite principles, which he has never feared to avow or to act upon; they are all summed up in six words—a dominant France and prostrate Europe. These principles would decide the attitude of France towards her neighbours, and to each they would imply menace and danger. With Germany, of course, war would be a question of time and opportunity. Taking Switzerland next in order, she stands in that unfortunate position, according to M.Thiers' published opinions, of a neutral too weak to be entitled to any rights as such! We find M. Thiers' sentiments upon this point in the sixth vol. p. 84. of *Le Consulat et l'Empire*, and they are certainly very Napoleonic and convenient for great Powers, but fatal for the small; not 'væ victis,' but to the poor neutral, is M. Thiers' maxim. According to his view then, should Switzerland fail to prevent a war between France and Germany, as she necessarily would fail, France would be at liberty to disregard Swiss neutrality and march her troops through Switzerland. Under M. Thiers certainly, under most French rulers probably, this would be done in case of war; because it is to be expected that Germany will protect her frontier on the side of France effectually, but not so on the side of Switzerland. Thus to Switzerland the reintegration of France, or the restoration of a Napoleonic policy, would be an unmixed evil.

Following the French frontier to the south, how

would Italy be affected by a restored French supremacy? Here, also, we need only quote M. Thiers, who openly proclaims his disapproval of a united Italy, and says that in acquiescing (for the present?) he yielded to necessity alone. As all ultramontane France echoes this sentiment, and the southern departments have been inspired with enmity to Italy * by the priesthood, it is no wonder if the Italian Government do not look forward cheerfully to a strong France. It will not be the fault of M. Thiers if the question of the temporal power is not made a thorn in the side of Italy, and kept alive for future exigences.

Still tracing the French frontier, we come to Spain, a country somewhat in the position of Italy, and not likely to find favour in M. Thiers' eyes, though probably safe from aggression. Spain has had the presumption to do what the French Government, under Louis Philippe, declared that 'France would never suffer.' She has chosen a king *not* a Bourbon. As France, under Napoleon III., would not permit Spain to choose a king ever so remotely related to the Crown of Prussia, we may fairly suppose that the son of the King of Italy would have been ordered to withdraw. The weakness of France was therefore the advantage of Spain.

Following the frontier north, we come to Belgium, a country whose independence was in great jeopardy some five or six years ago, and which M. Thiers probably conceives might be legitimately annexed upon two grounds. As a neutral she is too weak to claim any rights of neutrality (according to M. Thiers' canon), and as lying on the left bank of the Rhine, she comes, upon the same authority, within the 'natural frontiers

* Small incidents are sometimes as significant as greater, and in the recent mining of the Mont Cenis tunnel by the French engineers, in the obstructions thrown in the way of the Italian through-traffic and post-office, the ill-will of French officials may be detected.

'of France.' It is an unfortunate position to occupy, and the Belgians, perhaps, devoutly pray that they may never see a Franco-German war, or a France strong enough to enforce the policy of her President. Should another war between France and Germany occur after German engineers have made the German frontier from Belgium to Switzerland as strong as they doubtless intend, the first movement of a French army would probably be through Belgium. In no case would England be placed in a more painful position, if the ally of France. It would be easy to suffer the entrance of French troops into Belgium under pretence of only passing through; it might be harder to get them out again. Lord Palmerston had some experience on this point in 1831–32.*

Therefore, of all the nations bordering on France, it may be safely said that their interests and wishes are opposed to the restoration of a French supremacy, and more especially to that form of supremacy of which M. Thiers has ever been the champion. Is any remoter nation more interested in the question; or has England, for instance, any political or moral right to aim at imposing a yoke upon other continental nations which she would spurn herself? If a renewed Anglo-French Alliance aims either directly or remotely at the re-imposition of such a yoke, England is bound to consider whether, could her mere wish effect the purpose, it would be morally just or expedient to wish it. By thus assuming the ends of our policy to be already attained, or immediately attainable, we can best judge of its character.

* In 1831, Louis Philippe had sent an army into Belgium to expel the Dutch. On August 17th, Lord Palmerston writes: 'One thing is 'certain, the French must go out of Belgium, or we have a general 'war, and war in a given number of days.' On August 23rd, he writes: 'There never was certainly a more difficult task than that which we 'have now to perform in getting the French out of Belgium.'—*Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. pp. 105-113.

Of course it is not intended to argue that alliances with France or any other country which eschews ambition and aggression is bad *per se*, it is generally the reverse; the question only concerns France as a power aiming at European hegemony:—aiming at a position which she may have the military qualities to grasp, but which she wants the more solid and valuable qualities to maintain. It has been said above, that the nations bordering on France have obvious reasons for dreading her restored supremacy. The case of Germany need not be referred to, as evidently her fields and towns must be deluged with blood ere she yields the position she now holds; but there are Belgium, Switzerland, Italy deeply, and Spain less nearly affected. Their interests ought to concern a power, like England, professing to be guided by justice and moral laws; nevertheless there might be higher considerations involved to which those interests might be justly postponed. If there be any such considerations they should at least be definite and well understood, not merely vague generalities about 'the balance of power;' 'the maintenance of the Treaties of 1815;' 'the 'necessity of a strong France;' still less the inaccurate expressions 'our old' or 'our faithful ally.'

The balance of power excludes the idea of any preponderance, French or other, and is perhaps only possible in theory. The Treaties of 1815 were broken again and again by France and other Powers, and cannot be said to retain much validity in the present day. 'The 'necessity of a strong France' does not imply a France too strong for her neighbours' safety. France is not our 'old ally' so much as Prussia, or Holland, or Italy, as represented by the House of Savoy, and the epithet 'faithful' is no more applicable than faithless, as shown in the last chapter.

Still, there lurks in the mind of many Englishmen a conviction that in some way or other, either by treaty, by

some moral obligation, or by some paramount consideration of general interest, England is bound to assist France to regain her former position. It is contended here that no such obligation exists in any sense or could exist without a fearful responsibility for England. Were there any treaty obligation it would speak for itself, but there is none. It has been already shown that no obligation to adopt a policy conducive to a new Franco-German war arises out of our late alliance with France. If, indeed, we had in any way approved her attack on Prussia, or had failed to express our disapproval of it, our position would be very different; as it is, we may, with a clear conscience, leave France to the consequences of disregarding our honest advice. If either party have a right to complain of the other upon that occasion it is clearly England. In the article of the *Edinburgh Review*, already so often quoted on account of its supposed author's position, it is strongly stated that England had good ground for resenting the conduct of France in 1870.

With respect to any such 'paramount consideration 'of general interest' as might justify England in strengthening the hands of France for war, it is not easy even to imagine any. No advocate of an alliance with France as against Germany has ever shown any ground upon which England would incur this really awful responsibility of promoting a 'war of revenge.' To say that Germany, if not checked in time, may become as dangerous to European peace as France has often shown herself, might be a reason for alliance with Austria; it is none for an alliance with France, which would simply aim at substituting a known for an unknown danger.

Are there, then, objects common to the policy of both countries which would be secured by a new Anglo-French Alliance?

In answering this inquiry, the irrepressible 'Eastern 'Question' will suggest itself to every mind. In past

times (except in 1840, when M. Thiers had his own designs upon Egypt) France and England were united in supporting Turkey against Russia. It was a primary interest with France then, but it is only a secondary one now, and it is needless to say that the lesser interests give way to the greater. Should the case arrive in which we had to demand French aid against Russia in the East, the guiding consideration with France would naturally be whether hostile or amicable relations with Russia would best suit her purpose. The first object of French solicitude must be the rival and not friendly Power, whose outposts are now but six or seven days' march from Paris. To keep the Russians out of Constantinople may be desirable for France, but to get the Germans out of Alsace and Lorraine must be infinitely more so. It cannot be supposed for a moment that Russia does not know the price at which she might buy not merely the neutrality of France in the East, but even her co-operation. The French semi-official newspapers have made no secret since the war of the earnest desire of their Government to cultivate friendly relations with Russia. The smallest interchanges of courtesy have been magnified into symptoms of cordiality, and friendly speeches have been attributed to the Emperor of Russia by French writers which, in all probability, he never made, as they would have been offensive to Prussia.

All this is very natural and results from a geographical condition little observed or commented upon in quiet times, but which will be found to determine international relations more perhaps than anything else. It is said to be a maxim of Mahometan Civil Law (the Ottomans are not great civilians, though) that 'neighbouring 'Powers should be regarded with jealousy, but those '*next beyond* with favour, and others with impartiality.' Whether Dame Nature, experience, or abstract reasoning suggested the rule, it will be seen to be practically

adopted in the immense majority of cases where there is any approach to equality between the neighbouring Powers. In fact, it is easy to trace certain causes of the rule, for if A. and B. be neighbouring States, and C. a State on the farther side of B., the proximity of A. and B. will be sure in the course of time to furnish them with causes of dispute. With C., on the other hand, A. has no point of territorial contact, while each can aid the other against B., who stands in the relation of next neighbour to both. Upon this principle we should expect to find France and Germany bad neighbours, while France and Russia would naturally be friends. There is little doubt that on any disagreement between Russia and Prussia—and there are ample materials for such disagreement—there will be an approximation between Russia and France. Is it conceivable that France, for a comparatively remote object, will throw away the chance of such an alliance? In an alliance between England and France on the other hand, France could not expect any active aid against Germany, with whom we neither have nor are likely to have any dispute, so perfectly reconcileable are our interests. This view, of course, assumes that the fears of the Emperor William following the steps of either Napoleon are groundless. He has, it is true, given that unity to Germany which was essential to her safety—that unity which Napoleon III. promised at least to Italy. He has also repulsed and punished French aggression, but as yet there are certainly no symptoms of his being either mad or wicked enough to make conquests for the love of conquests.

It has, strange to say, possessed the fancy of some people that Germany will next attack Holland, and perhaps Belgium, to the imminent danger of our coasts, thus exposed to invasion! Such alarmists may comfort themselves by reflecting that Germany has no ironclad fleet for such an operation, and that when she has one

the harbours of Holland are too shallow to contain it, and Antwerp, the only naval port in Belgium, is less suitable than those already available in the Elbe and Weser.* Jahde will probably be the chief naval port of Germany, and a glance at the Admiralty chart will show its immense superiority over the Texel and the tortuous and narrow Scheldt.

That the Germans *intend* to build a powerful navy is highly probable, and it is very natural that they should, considering that their ocean commerce already exceeds that of France and is increasing far more rapidly. But here also the Prussophobists may comfort themselves. When Germany shall have as many ironclads as Great Britain—that is to say, fifty—she will have neither one more nor less than France has at this moment, with an impregnable harbour capable of containing them all (Cherbourg) eighty miles from our shores. Germany, however, must work long and hard before her (at present non-existent) fleet shall be the danger to England that the French fleet has very often been during critical periods of our alliance. When, after several 'panics' about invasion, a First Lord of the Admiralty could tell the House of Commons that with 'two years' ' preparation he could meet an emergency, but that the difference between the French system and our own was that France could, but we could not, man a fleet when required, our peril was obviously very great. The singular and *naïve* unconsciousness of the First Lord as to the very object of his own official existence is not more wonderful than the patience of the House of Commons in listening to the helpless avowal. But we must not blame France in the past and Germany in the future for the shortcomings of our own Admiralty system. England, with her naval resources

* It is not meant that a large ironclad could not enter the Texel or reach Antwerp, but the channels between the shoals are so narrow and intricate as to make it dangerous and difficult.

properly administered, might laugh at the possibility of invasion, and, strange to say, no man understood where the real fault lay better than Mr. Cobden. Amidst all the strange accidents which decide the choice of a Minister to wield the trident, no one ever thought of making Mr. Cobden First Lord of the Admiralty, and yet it is a fact that he would (apart from his mania about perpetual peace) have filled the office better than most of its occupants. His strong, clear common sense made him see that a fleet which could not be made available in time was no fleet at all, and his patriotism made him quite willing—as he more than once declared—to vote any sum necessary to maintain a British preponderance at sea. In reference, therefore, to the statement made in excuse of the Admiralty as to 'want of seamen,' Mr. Cobden very clearly said that the remedy lay in offering a higher inducement, and showed* that even 150,000 seamen could be procured for sixpence in the Income Tax, or for 'half the duties paid on ardent spirits consumed annually in England.'

It is not irrelevant to recur to this topic, as we may reasonably expect to see a very formidable German navy in a few years, and to hear a cry of alarm, as if like France we thought our safety lay in the weakness of our neighbours, instead of the due use of the superior resources which Providence has given us.

It was unquestionably the patent fact of our being for years at the mercy of any sudden attack from France that made both Louis Philippe and Napoleon III. bestow such disproportionate care and expense upon the French navy. The same outlay that gave France an admirable navy † (which was to be merely 'de luxe') would have

* Mr. COBDEN'S Pamphlet, *The Three Panics*, p. 89.

† An idea prevailed in England that the French fleet did less in 1870 than it should have done, and that, in fact, it was not in an efficient state. There cannot be a greater error. The French fleet did all that

given her the frontier fortresses and the army that might have saved her from subjugation. What a strange illustration of the French proverb as to man proposing and God disposing, that the Admiralty incompetence which often endangered England should only injure France, and the French naval administrative skill, too intently watching that weakness, should contribute not to our ruin but to that of France!

Had not ignorance and incompetence thrown away a naval prestige which was unquestioned forty years ago, and might have been easily maintained, France would never have competed with England at sea—the difference of 1840 would never have occurred—Louis Philippe might not have been dethroned—Napoleon III. might never have ruled! As already said, there is no reason to think that a French alliance could under existing circumstances be reckoned upon as against Russia. With Austria England could have no difference, and there is no other European Power except Germany which in a just cause we could not meet without French assistance. Were there the remotest likelihood of an English war with Germany a French alliance would of course be important, but we should be certain to have it in such a case, as France will long consider that she has a standing *casus belli* with that Power.

Not to appear to pass too lightly over what, nevertheless, seems almost impossible—an Anglo-German war—the only plausible cause ever assigned is a German

any other fleet could have done; exactly what our own used to do when they closely blockaded the French ports. As to the *morale* of the French navy, no body of men ever came out of a losing contest with greater honour. When their ships were laid up in the winter of 1870–1, the whole body of the French navy, under their own admirals, captains, and officers, fought undauntedly on every field, from the Channel to Switzerland, defended the Paris forts with signal ability, and were, in fact, after Sedan the only soldiers in the war. English sailors might have done as much, *more* they *could* not.

annexation of Holland. As already said, the Dutch ports will not furnish the inducement to such a crime; nor would the common excuse of rectifying a frontier, for the Dutch-Belgian frontier is as bad as it could be. The mere lust of territory might of course operate upon an unprincipled nation in any case, but the Germans, even in the opinion of those Frenchmen capable of rising above prejudice, are not unprincipled. It must also be borne in mind that Germany is not Prussia, and the Germans, though jealous of the rights of German soil, as they one and all sincerely considered Schleswig-Holstein to be, are not greedy of non-German soil. Of the Germans, M. Ernest Renan,* after saying that 'Prussia 'will have been the energetic instrument employed by 'Germany to deliver her from the menace of a Bona-'partist France,' and that it was France which gave to Prussia her predominance in Germany, goes on to say: 'Now Germany left to her own nature will be a liberal 'and *peaceful* nation, democratic even in the legitimate 'sense of the word. I believe that the social sciences 'will owe to her a striking advancement, and that many 'ideas which among us wear the repulsive mask of 'socialism will with her assume a practical and beneficent 'form.' Thus speaks a Frenchman who knows Germany as well as he does France.

To quote an Englishman equally qualified to form an opinion, and who discusses the very point here considered —the 'popular delusion' prevailing about danger to Holland from Germany—Mr. Grant Duff, in speaking of Holland in 1867, says: 'So far as I can learn, the best 'minds in Holland have never shared the popular delu-'sion that they were going to be eaten up by Prussia. 'There is something almost ludicrous, although the 'inhabitant of an island so liable to panics has perhaps

* *La Guerre entre la France et l'Allemagne*, p. 161. It is bound up with *Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale de la France.*

'no right to smile, in the notion of a country with a 'great history and distinguished European rank putting 'herself on a level with the mere Hanovers and Bavarias, 'and imagining that the same logic which made Prussia 'dangerous to them should make her dangerous to 'Holland.'

Mr. Grant Duff's political previsions have generally proved correct, and in this case the five years that have passed go to confirm his opinion. The fact is, there can be no analogy between the motives which made Prussia absorb Hanover, who had taken part against her, and the motives that could apply to any new conquest. The Treaties of 1815, from regard to the personal interests of petty sovereigns, had given Prussia a wholly exceptional territorial constitution. They made a kingdom divided into two separated portions, with independent territories between them. To unite and consolidate the severed dominion of Prussia was the only way to give military unity and strength to the State which forms the back-bone of Germany. It was a necessity, but it does not follow that the King of Prussia, like Napoleon I., should never know when to stop. It is excusable, therefore, to believe that, as against Germany, England will never need the alliance of France.

Are there, then, if not military reasons for such an alliance, any motives of political or religious sympathy, such as united England and France in 1830, or England and Holland in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries? It might be said that, at this moment, both countries are under Liberal Governments—a fact constituting a tie between them. But, in the first place, France is by no means more under a Liberal rule than Austria, Italy, or Spain. She is nominally under a Conservative and Parliamentary, but in fact under a personal Government, 'tempered' by military law. For the present, if France be wise, she will have no foreign policy; but such

a foreign policy as M. Thiers has professed can hardly be accordant with English views. It is, however, in the case of France, necessary to have regard not to the present phase only of her varying government and policy, but to what is likely to succeed. Without pretending to guess even at what may happen in the present year, one may say that there are forms of government which we may possibly see in France, and should of course acknowledge, but with which we could not safely cultivate intimate relations. There is, for instance, a Prætorian Government pure and simple, in which the army, finding the Chamber unable to govern, or factions tearing the country to pieces, might decide upon installing a chief of their own selection. Though France has had military despots who relied upon the army in case of need to crush the people, that is not what is here meant, for in those cases the initiative did not come from the army itself. But it is quite conceivable that the French army (which has been exercising judicial and executive functions in a manner somewhat unusual) might some day see itself the only efficient depositary of the national sovereignty. M. Thiers keeps things together at present, and the Chamber, with a possibly questionable authority, is still acknowledged to represent the country. Many events—besides the death of a man now seventy-six—might destroy that authority, and the existing constitution makes no provision for such events.* The moral power of the Assembly once paralyzed, two organizations only capable of united action would survive—the Parisian populace or Commune, red or tricolour, and the army. Heretofore the Parisian populace has under such circum-

* The idea of making the power of the Assembly devolve upon the Municipal Councils, in case of insurrection suspending the Legislature, was excellent; but bodies scattered all over France would hardly make head for some time against the better organized Parisian or other urban insurgents.

stances seized upon the government, and the army has acquiesced in accomplished facts, but circumstances are changed. The animosity between the army and the populace making co-operation impossible, the strongest or the boldest would grasp the helm—more probably the army. How far the French people would acquiesce in a Prætorian Government so installed, none can tell. A Council of military officers sitting in the Luxembourg would be a new phase of revolutionary authority, but not more illegal than others which have been installed there. As Thiers says that Napoleon I. 'perpetuated the Revolu-'tion under monarchical forms,' * so a Prætorian Government might claim the merit of doing so under military. Both claims would be equally absurd, but what would that matter if the phrase sounded well and were popular? Yet a Prætorian Government would have its inconveniences in an alliance.

Another phase of government as yet untried in France, though attempted during the late war, may possibly be seen—a Federal Government, allowing to each old province, or modern department, or other division, its autonomy. Such a solution of political difficulties would only be recurred to in France after

* The brilliant passage in which Thiers represents his idol as the champion of Democracy and the Revolution (the two things which he most abhorred and suppressed) is well known. It is the delight of Frenchmen to imagine that, in default of freedom or good government, they always have those impalpable essences 'the glorious principles of 'our immortal Revolution.' Should France, failing to find another Saviour of Society, invite the Sultan to govern her in Turkish fashion (and she might do worse), some writer would find that Abdul-Aziz only 'perpetuated the Revolution under Oriental forms.' It would be a good phrase, which is the main point, and not wanting in a certain amount of truth. The principle of 'Equality' is a fundamental maxim of Islam. The restrictions on individuals in disposing of their property are to be found in Turkey. The other members of the sacred triad besides Equality—Liberty and Fraternity—are as well understood there as in France.

many failures and struggles; but it is possible, and it might place an allied Government in some difficulty. The excessive taxation which awaits France might revive the feelings which M. Ernest Renan tells us form her chief danger and threaten disintegration under certain circumstances. The elements of such disintegration, M. Renan tells us, exist in the jealousy of Paris which pervades the provinces. 'This desire for a political 'position, implying the least possible interference of the 'Central Government, is the universal desire of the pro-'vinces. The antipathy which they feel to Paris is not 'merely a just indignation against a factious minority; 'it is not merely revolutionary Paris, it is governing 'Paris which France dislikes. Paris is in France 'synonymous with burdensome exactions. It is Paris 'which levies men, which absorbs money, and employs it 'for a multitude of objects which the provinces don't 'comprehend. The most capable administrator of the 'last reign, referring to the election of 1869, told me that 'the thing most endangered in France, according to his 'view, was the revenue: the provinces at every election 'forcing the candidates to give pledges which sooner or 'later would have to be fulfilled in some degree, and 'which would prove fatal to the public finances.'

'The first time that I met Prévost Paradol on his 'return from an electoral campaign in the Loire Supé-'rieure, I asked him what had most impressed him. He 'answered, "We shall soon see the end of the State." 'It was exactly what I should have said myself had 'he asked my impressions about the Seine and Marne. 'Let the *préfets* meddle with as few matters as pos-'sible; let the taxes and the conscription be reduced as 'low as practicable.'* As there is little prospect of any diminution of these burdens, which are already so far heavier than those of 1869, the probability of a schism

* *Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale de la France*, p. 30.

between Paris and the provinces seems greater than it was then. Should, then, a Government exist in Paris not acknowledged by provincial France, any intimate relations with it would be compromising for England. Thus it is easy to specify circumstances which would render a French alliance undesirable in respect of one or other section of the nation; and there are, of course, many circumstances equally possible which cannot be anticipated. If the relations of the French Government with France herself are precarious, and with other countries not in accordance with English views, there certainly is not the *religious* sympathy which in former times often determined alliances.

So far as M. Thiers represents France, his declared opinion is that France, by her antecedents and interests, is placed at the head of Roman Catholic nations, just as Prussia is placed at the head of the Protestant. His patriotism, more than his religion, leads him to dream of a new league among the Latin race professing the Roman Catholic faith, and he accepts that faith as he finds it at present—Ultramontane, a somewhat intractable form, as many continental Governments now find.

Dismissing altogether as out of place here the purely religious part of the question, a Liberal Government in England can hardly desire the prevalence of that Ultramontanism which all over the Continent is considered directly antagonistic to Liberalism. But should France, uniting Roman Catholic Europe under the banners of religion, seek to overwhelm the Protestant States of Germany, whatever were the Government of England, her place could not be in that alliance. The likelihood of such an alliance is not great, but it does apparently find some place in French counsels. M. Thiers probably misapprehends the spirit of the age in making the temporal power a stalking-horse of his policy. Though

war is declared between Ultramontanism and modern Germany, France will hardly rally to the cry of 'The 'Pope-King and Clerical Rule!' By some irony of events, France, the 'eldest daughter' (the sonship is in abeyance) of the Church, is the country which cares least about her, and which hates her priests only less than she does the Prussians. It is upon the *faith* of the least believing, least serious, wittiest, and most scoffing of people that Rome affects to rely for filial affection.

In every aspect, then, a renewed Anglo-French Alliance would for some time to come be at least inopportune. When the German occupation ceases, and the muzzle is taken off the French press, a great strain will be brought on the pacific relations of the two countries, and an ally would be perpetually witnessing provocation on the side of the French writers and speakers which he could not but condemn. The newspapers are, it is understood, 'invited' to moderation at present, and their own sense would counsel it while the Germans are masters of French provinces. But even now one sees in the literature of France * samples of the angry abuse that will be poured out upon Germany when the flood-gates are opened, and which may lead to unexpected consequences. French writers have the immense advantage of a world-wide circulation, due both to the universality of their language and the charm of their style. Unrestrained by any scruples as to facts, they will malign and misrepresent the Germans under every form

* Take as instances the *Alsace* of EDMOND ABOUT, and *L'Allemagne en* 1871 by ERNEST FEYDEAU. In the first the author has the excuse of his imprisonment, but his sharp, telling satire will not fail to take effect. M. Feydeau, who is an invalid, seems to write for the sole purpose of discharging his bile, and manages to say everything of the Germans that could exasperate. He tells the reader that as a paralytic he was wholly helpless, but his tongue was able to heap insults upon the Germans in their own country. He does not see one inference which the reader may draw.

of literature. To do so will be to the authors a labour of love; but the keen, stinging sarcasms will not fail to create what does not exist at present—a reciprocal hatred. There will also be questions of frontier fortresses on the extreme limits of French territory, military questions as to their admissibility in certain cases, and jealousy of real or supposed military sketching and surveying. All such misunderstandings may provoke local collisions; and any country with intimate political relations with France would be constantly appealed to and placed in an awkward position. The less England is mixed up with such controversies the better will she stand, not with Germany only, but with France herself, who might get weary of well-meant advice and remonstrance.

Nor is it quite clear that France herself desires a pacific ally, who might claim some influence in her counsels and would be constantly opposed to the promised Revanche. Judging from an article in the *Deux Mondes* by M. E. Duvergier de Hauranne in June last, France looks to Russia rather than England, and considers that we were shamefully wanting to our obligations in the late war. If that able writer expresses the general opinions of Frenchmen on the point, they have not yet attained to such practical views as Englishmen expect in an ally. Beginning with the awful announcement, 'There is no longer any Europe' (because there is no longer a dominant France), he goes on to tell us, 'Of all these nations, the least provident and the most 'severely punished beyond all contradiction is England. 'Our disasters, in which the British Cabinet had, so to 'speak, made itself an accomplice, has been injurious to 'English policy. Many people begin to think that the 'English alliance has become more burdensome than 'useful.' M. Duvergier de Hauranne admits that Napoleon III. was guilty of inconsistencies 'and 'perfidies,' that the Cabinet of the Tuileries had, by its

spirit of adventure and dishonest designs ('arrière-pensées malhonnêtes'), endangered the alliance, but still considers England bound by it. He speaks of the 'extreme ill-will of England,' and actually repeats M. Thiers' argument about the gratitude due from her to France, 'who, in times of difficulty like the Indian 'Mutiny, derived no advantage from her embarrassment.' By this utter inability to comprehend the plainest obligations of an ally, Frenchmen explain much of their country's policy and show the difficulty of any cordial alliance with them. They boast of their honesty in not attacking us when we were disabled, but complain of us when we might with far more reason boast that we abstained from a similar course, notwithstanding the provocation given by the Belgian treachery. Following the course of M. de Hauranne's arguments, he seems to think that the renunciation of the Treaty of Paris by Russia was the just punishment of England for not aiding France in an unjust war; that French diplomacy judiciously shapes its course to be ready to accept the offers of England or Russia as might seem best; and that for the future France has more to hope from Russia than England, unless, indeed, the latter repents of her errors and becomes a more efficient ally. M. de Hauranne concludes by asking, 'Must we believe such symptoms? Is 'the English alliance dead?' That England also should find any other ally does not occur to M de Hauranne.

Of course no sane Englishman would advocate a French alliance at the price of war with Germany, even if, as the author quoted threatens, the result of not courting the friendship of France should be a Franco-Russian alliance in the East. It is one of many French misconceptions that England is more interested than France in keeping Russia out of Constantinople; it is another that England is more dependent upon France

than France upon England. Whatever may have been the gain derived from the French Alliance, we must not forget that it has alienated from us other nations less aggressive than France, and in many respects more identified with our interests and more in accordance with our political ideas. While France under personal government represented no more than the opinions of an individual mind influenced by a pernicious theory, and often scheming against neighbouring States, there were countries, like Austria and Italy, with responsible Governments like our own, left outside the sphere of our foreign policy.

The primary interest of England in European politics may be assumed to be the preservation of peace. Had France shown that she believed it to be hers also, that fact in itself would have justified the Anglo-French Alliance. But in sixteen years France had attacked three out of the four Great Powers, and had dictated her will to minor Powers in matters where she had no just right to interfere. She professed, moreover, and acted upon the theory that the position acquired for her by the aggressions and wrongs of the First Empire had become the legitimate inheritance of the Second. The last Great Power attacked by her, as Carlyle says, 'the,' perhaps, 'bravest nation in the world, though the least braggart, 'so long insulted and trampled on by a luckier not a 'braver,' turned upon her aggressor, defeated, and chastised him. Thereupon an outcry is raised as if justice had fallen and violence had usurped her seat. A dominant France with a Napoleonic theory was (in spite of her attacking three Great Powers and making ample preparations for attacking the fourth) a guarantee for peace; but a dominant Germany was a danger to Europe! And yet, when we get over the novelty, it will probably appear to us that Germany now occupies exactly the position that general policy would assign to

her and which Nature seems to have intended her to fill. The very least desirable arrangement in the interest of peace was a cluster of weak and divided States occupying the space between France on one side and Russia on the other. They seemed to invite attack from their weakness, and one or more was ever ready to turn traitor and welcome the invader. It follows, therefore, that to consolidate those States into a body capable of resisting French aggression on one side and Russian on the other, was a necessary condition of European peace and stability. To acquire such an internal organization was the clearest right of Germany, and for France to contest that right was as reasonable as it would be for England to contest the right of France to grow rich or the right of America to increase her population. That France saw danger to her own military pre-eminence in the organization of a strong State where the general interest requires a strong State—in the centre of Europe—only showed that the military pre-eminence of France is opposed to the interests of Europe. Having, however, staked her claim to that pre-eminence on the issue of a war, and lost that stake, her victor has acquired the only right that ever France had—the right of the strongest. The position of Germany as the leading Power of continental Europe is to the full as legitimate as was the position of France before, and, so far as experience extends, is more likely to be beneficial.

To look upon Germany, therefore, as usurping a position *belonging* to France is absurd, and to assert the *duty* of the French nation to recover their military pre-eminence, as some English writers have done, is mischievous. Any English Government that encouraged such an idea would make itself responsible for human misery to an amount which no one can compute; and if a renewed Anglo-French alliance implies any desire to restore France to her former position, it is to be sincerely

deprecated. If France is again to wrest the sword from Germany, it must in all probability be by the aid of Russia, and to contribute in the smallest degree to such a catastrophe for humanity, such a desolation of the homes and hearths of the gallant Teutons, would be a hateful iniquity. For the present, it seems the natural policy and the obvious duty of England to accept the position which Germany has so fairly won for herself, and to give to her, as holding it, the same confidence and friendship which we gave to France. What is there in our German kinsmen that they should be less our allies? Are they less honest, less truthful, more ambitious, aggressive, vainglorious? Are their traditions of oppression and spoliation gilded with the name of glory? None can assert it. They respect themselves and respect others, they love honest toil, peace, and home, and only ask to be left in quiet enjoyment of the very moderate blessings which Nature has given them. They are our own counterparts; but, like Britons, though lovers of peace, they are to be dreaded in war.

Is it then contended that, because France, through her own fault, has terminated the alliance with England, that we should cease to be friends? Far from it. True friendship will be best shown by discouraging *in every way* that 'revanche' which can only, even if successful, keep France in the old and fatal groove of aggression and conquest, provoking retribution and humiliation. It is time for France to grow wise. The First Bonaparte could not (though the greatest leader of modern times) save her from deserved defeat, and every Bonaparte is not exactly like the first. *One* danger to France is her stationary population: must war be called in to lessen that population?

CHAPTER IX.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

WHAT is the 'Eastern Question' of which the world has heard so much for the last forty years and upwards?

To most Englishmen it implies the 'Integrity of 'the Ottoman Empire' and its defence against Russian encroachments. Why against *Russian* especially it would be hard to say, seeing that France has actually appropriated more of that Empire * than Russia; and if it be said that Russia *intended* to deprive Turkey of Wallachia and Moldavia, it may be added that France intended to do more under M. Thiers in 1840, regarding Egypt.

But assuming that the Eastern Question means for Englishmen the defence of the Turkish dominions, the next point is, What interest has England in their defence?

Ninety-nine out of a hundred Englishmen will say that the security of our possessions in India is involved in the defence of Turkey, and they would have made the same answer when the circumstances of India, of Russia, and of Turkey were utterly different.

Some Englishmen would add, in disregard of the points of the compass, and in contempt of geography

* Algeria was a province of the Ottoman Empire owning the suzerainty of the Sultan. Tunis also, over which France claimed a protectorate—perhaps still claims one—Egypt, and Syria, M. Thiers tried to detach from the Porte in 1840. France would have left less to Turkey in that case than would Russia.

and the august Society which patronizes it, 'And Constan-'tinople is the key of India!' If so, never was key so hopelessly mislaid, and we may be quite sure that Russia at least will never pass the Bosphorus to find it. Those who think that Russia would take Constantinople as one stage to India, usually think that Egypt would be the next—a still more surprising idea. That a Power far advanced in Central Asia, having territory almost in sight of the Hindoo Koosh, and not 800 miles from Delhi, should retrograde to Europe, then pass through parts of Asia, to get into Africa, and then back to Asia, would certainly be among the 'curiosities of strategy.' It is none the less true that France, Austria, or Italy, if desiring to invade India, would take the route of Egypt because they have no better; but Russia would not take it, because she has no worse. Not even if established in Constantinople would she think of Egypt as the road to India, and this for several reasons. To carry her army by sea would of course be exactly what England would wish while she remains what she is: it must, therefore, be meant that Russia would march her army by land, through Asia Minor, taking the road probably by Kutaya, Aksheir, Konieh, Scanderoon, Aleppo, and the Pashalic of Damascus. But that is precisely the route on which Turkey could best concentrate her forces and England could best support her. It would, in its southern portion, approach the coast; it abounds with strong positions where a small auxiliary English force might, with Turkish aid, effectually bar the way, and where the mountain tribes, officered by Englishmen, would cut the communications and harass the enemy. This was exemplified in 1840, when the Egyptian army, lately victorious over the Turks and occupying all Syria, were beaten, dislodged, and driven out of the country by an insignificant English auxiliary force with the fleet for a base of operations.

But even were a Russian army established in Egypt while England held the Mediterranean and Red Sea, it would only be in the position of the French army left there by Bonaparte to capitulate. Russia is not likely to repeat the mistake, and especially while possessing more than one other line entirely removed from the sphere of English or Turkish operations.

So far, then, from Turkey in Europe, or even in Asia, lying on the Russian road to India, or forming in any sense a barrier against Russian aggression thereon, it may be affirmed that any warlike designs of Russia against Turkey would imply the absence of such designs on India. Or to express this proposition, so contrary to the general belief, more clearly: If Russia had hostile designs on India, they would only be retarded by war with Turkey, but they might be materially promoted by a permanent good understanding with that Power.*

It is true, at the same time, that a moral effect would be produced in India by any success of Russia in Turkey if obtained against English efforts; and what is of equal importance, the Afghans and other wild tribes would be affected by it. But as they are fierce fanatical Mahometans, it by no means follows that Russia would gain influence among them by any successes against the Sultan, regarded by those tribes as the 'Father of the 'Faithful.' It is not certain even that the capture of Constantinople would really weaken the Ottoman race or discourage the Mahometans of Central Asia. The territories of the Sultan are disproportionately large, for the purely Mahometan population, who are not 'at home' in Europe, do not thrive there, and are said by many travellers to entertain the belief that ere long they will have to retire into Asia. Falling back upon that continent, where the 'cities have become villages, the 'villages hamlets, and the hamlets are deserted by a

* Recent events in Central Asia confirm this view.

'population no longer able to pay the fixed quota,'* the Ottoman might be all the stronger for concentration.

As already said, any military advantage gained by Russia over England would affect our military reputation in India unfavourably, and in a less degree an advantage gained over us by any other Power would do so. Our hold upon the native mind depends upon the belief that, as we proved ourselves stronger than the French, the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the various Indian sovereigns, so we should continue to hold the field against all comers. But if we imagine a Russian invasion of Turkey, during which England maintained a strict neutrality, the case would be different. Our policy would appear to have changed, but our arms would have sustained no defeat, and though the news would be for a time the talk of the bazaars, it is not certain that our interests would suffer. It is among the possibilities of the future that Russia, without abandoning her views on Constantinople, may seek their attainment by different —and possibly surer—means. Where steel has failed, the 'silver key,' known to Philip of Macedon, has succeeded, and the time may come when its power will prevail even over the pride of the Mussulman. Whether the 'sick man' has a better constitution than his expectant heir desires, is matter of dispute, but about his financial ill-health there can be no question. A Power like Turkey, which has learnt no more of Christian finance than the pleasant art of borrowing, and whose six per cent. stock is quoted at 73, is tending to a financial crisis, which rigid economy alone could avert. But economy is too lowly a virtue for the Sublime

* By a vicious fiscal system which levied the same tax on a community, however much it might diminish in number, the population of towns and villages in Asiatic Turkey have in many cases been driven to migration.

Porte,* especially while Christians and Jews contend for the honour of supplying fresh loans to pay the interest on the last. Young men of fortune try the same process in England, and find benevolent individuals who supply their wants—for a time. But when we observe a long-headed, hard-fisted man of capital closely watching the country-seat of the young prodigal, 'taking stock' of

* The following extract from an English newspaper in the month of January, 1873, will explain what becomes of the money borrowed at 10 per cent. 'A correspondent in the Levant writes:—"I send you a couple of cases illustrating the ways of life out here. The late Sultan, wishing to give the ladies of his harem an idea of the Crystal Palace, commissioned a firm of shipbuilders on the Thames to construct the iron framework of a huge dome-like structure. It was, when completed, put up in England, and then taken to pieces for conveyance to Constantinople, where it was re-erected and covered in with glass, and formed one of the most conspicuous and pretty objects which met the travellers' gaze on going up the Bosphorus. The present Sultan, however, thought that it interfered with his view, and ordered it to be demolished, and the débris of a building, which from first to last must have cost more than 100,000*l.*, has been sold for old scrap iron. The other story is still more strange. The Father of the Faithful some time since ordered a new and gorgeous imperial residence to be built for himself. Art, money, and science were lavished on the structure, the sum total of the cost of which was almost fabulous. The day arrived when the Sultan was told that all was prepared for his reception in his new abode. His Majesty quitted his old and inconvenient palace with a light heart, and hastily repaired to the splendid and more modern one; but alas! whether his impatience or ardour got the better of his dignity is not related, but on crossing the threshold he stumbled and fell. The omen was of too serious a character to be lost on an Oriental mind. The Sultan retraced his steps, sent for the architect, and commanded that the gorgeous and magnificent edifice should be razed to the ground. The gentleman in question in despair repaired to the Grand Vizier, who failed to obtain a revocation of the order, but as a *dernier ressort* proceeded to the English Ambassador, who at once pointed out to his Majesty how ridiculous such an act would make him appear before the civilized world. This, with other arguments, saved the palace, but the evil eye is supposed still to rest on it, as it remains empty."'

the buildings, the farms, the timber, we know what it means. The old family estate and residence, however deeply the owner may regret it, are about to change hands. Is it impossible that Russia may some day be able to take advantage of the pecuniary necessities of the Porte, and buy out a bankrupt owner of Constantinople at a price that would suit both parties? 'Impossible' to-day, perhaps; 'not to be thought of.' Such has been the firm conviction, the resolute assertion of many a man who sold the ancestral seat nevertheless.

And if the present or a future Sultan had come to the end of his power to borrow, and found a yearly increasing deficit a source of vexation and embarrassment: if—for misfortunes do not come singly—the ill-paid officials of the Empire have taken to pay themselves at the expense of foreign merchants: if their complaints are urged by their several Ambassadors or Ministers: if, when these complaints have to be met by pecuniary redress, as would be the case, each Ambassador feels that his own success depends upon being more urgent than his colleagues, and is so: if, when every salary is in arrear, the army and navy in arrears of pay, the new Minister of Finance (the tenth occupant of the office in as many months) is at his wits' end, and a financial crisis imminent—then the time of the excellent Count Macchiavelloffski will have arrived. The Sultan's extremity is his opportunity, but a disinterested candour and undiplomatic generosity are his foibles; he holds back to give his colleague—'Mon cher confrère'—the advantage of a favourable opportunity for urging his 'very legitimate grievance,'—so the Count calls it.

His Excellency accepts the offer, requests an audience, and, as a diplomatic Job's comforter, paraphrases the homely and soothing 'I warned you of this before' in diplomatic language. He offers much excellent advice to the same effect that his predecessors have done for

twenty years past, but being somewhat more urgent, with rather less effect—except upon his Sublime Majesty's temper. His Sublimity has had more than enough of Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, but the representative of the French Empire, Kingdom, Republic, or Commune (the point was being adjusted between the army and the 'People' in the Paris streets when the courier left) is next announced. His Excellency has good advice also to offer, but to the opposite effect, so far as the choice of his Highness's Ministers is concerned. None can save the Empire but his Excellency's protégé, —— Pasha. In him alone can France place any confidence, and, without of course presuming to dictate, he *must* be recalled. Had not a malign influence (the British) displaced —— Pasha, all would have gone well, but his Highness will acknowledge the justice and moderation of France in INSISTING, &c. &c. Exit the French Ambassador, to be followed in turn by the representatives of every other European State, each offering advice inconsistent with the last, but all preaching the economy which will not be practised, and reforms which, for various reasons, cannot. If advice were piastres the Sultan would soon be solvent, but an empty treasury, like an empty stomach, tries the temper, and his Highness, who wants comfort, only receives lectures, complaints, demands. He, the august Head of the House of Othman, the Father of the Faithful, lectured, scolded! and by whom? If the Sultan realized the fact that it is to his position in Europe, to his rule over a Christian population, who call upon their brother Christians for protection, that he owes the interference of foreign Ambassadors in his domestic affairs; that he is, in fact, in a state of tutelage, and that in a large portion of his European dominion his sovereignty is only nominal, he might value those dominions less.

It is at least conceivable that a time may come when

a Sultan shall see that the natural soil of Islam is not European, that the great Asiatic flood which once invaded Europe from the East and from the West has for several generations steadily receded, and never more than in our own time. Greece has gone altogether. The Danubian Principalities and Servia are retained only in name, and the reasons for conceding their virtual independence must ere long prevail in the case of other European provinces. When a Sultan shall admit these facts, the pear will be ripe for Russian diplomacy. It will not be hard for Russia to devise terms upon which, by means of a large pecuniary payment, and a liberal annual sum to which the name of 'Tribute' might be given, to soothe the Ottoman pride, the long-coveted gem might be acquired. The full pecuniary value of Constantinople to the Sultan might be paid by Russia twice over, and Russia be the gainer. In the same way Roumelia, or any part of it necessary to the possession of Constantinople, might be purchased on terms mutually advantageous, since its value, in Russian hands, would not fail to double in a few years, unprofitable as it has been to Turkey. But to acquire the metropolis of Islam, Russia would doubtless have to bid very high, and to make some arrangement by which the Turkish Government should be relieved from its supposed insolvency. Upon this head it may be said that if Russia be resolved at some future time to acquire Constantinople by force of arms, unless she can do so by negociation, she would find it cheaper to purchase. Cheaper even if she took upon herself the Turkish foreign debt.

To buy out the Sultan's right in the whole of his European dominions upon the same terms, giving more than the present full calculated value of the revenues, may seem an extravagant idea. It would require the concurrence of Austria at least; possibly of other Powers whose own interests would have to be consulted. But

the course of events stronger than the pride of Sultans or the fierce zeal of Mahometans may bring it about. It seems at least the constant tendency of the times to strengthen the Christian and weaken the other races.

Should such an arrangement, or something like it, which gave Russia Constantinople and Roumelia, be agreed upon between Russia and the Porte, would it imply any danger to our Indian Empire, and ought England to oppose it?

Those who can see in Constantinople 'the key of 'India' will hardly consider such a question with patience. They will think it answered by the fact that we went to war in 1854 expressly for the defence of Turkey, incurred a hundred millions of debt, sacrificed lives not to be valued in money, and threw back the national prosperity by several years.

But the fact that we went to war does not prove that we were wise in doing so. A few persons of authority were opposed to the war at the time; many more question its policy now. If the safety of India was our motive, it was certainly not secured by that war. Russia has advanced more rapidly and steadily since its conclusion than she ever did before, nor is this surprising.

In 1854 the eyes of Russia were turned to the west and her back to India. Repulsed in the West she turned to the East, and a very short space now separates her advanced posts from our East Indian frontier. Had we failed in the Crimean war and Russia been successful in her designs on Turkey, she would have had far too much occupation in Europe to have made progress in Central Asia. Success was on our side, and upon the road by which, if at all, Russia must invade India, her advance has been immense, and what is more, well secured.*

* The repulse of a Russian detachment in Khiva has only sealed the fate of that province, and made the Russian hold in Central Asia prospectively more firm.

Some persons may still urge that at least our moral influence in India benefited by our Crimean enterprise. Was that so? The war ended in 1856, and in 1857 our rule in India was endangered by the most serious general mutiny recorded in history. The fact hardly confirms the assertion as to our moral influence.

Of course there were other considerations besides the security of our Indian possessions which decided Parliament and the Government of the day in favour of the war. It was not, of course, to secure British power in India that France fought at Sebastopol, and it may be assumed that the Allies had, or thought they had, some common interest in upholding Turkey. To France it is manifestly an advantage to keep a powerful and aggressive rival like Russia out of the Mediterranean. M. Thiers tells us, in his *History of the Consulate and the Empire*, that so far back as the conference at Tilsit, when Napoleon I. was most anxious to obtain the alliance of Russia, he would not admit the idea even of her acquiring Constantinople. His opinion of the military and political value of Constantinople was expressed by saying that the master of Constantinople would be the master of the world, and though an exaggeration, there was a measure of truth in the assertion. But to England, which is not a Mediterranean Power, which out of eight islands in that sea lately hers, has only cared to retain one, it is of far less importance who may hold Constantinople than it is to France. That such was the opinion of French statesmen was shown in 1833, in regard to the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, which had given to Russia a virtual protectorate of Turkey. France was desirous to act with England upon that occasion, but was prepared to act without her * as far as naval opera-

* Alluding to the attitude assumed by France towards Russia, in 1833, Lord Palmerston says (*Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. ii. p. 158): 'The settlement of this matter will be a great advantage; for if it had 'gone on, the French and Russians might have come to blows.'

tions were concerned, and again in 1840, as already mentioned, a similar resolution was taken in Paris.

When such was the case, it was as unfortunate as impolitic, that in 1854 we not only assumed the part of the nation most interested in fighting for Turkey, but allowed France to claim our gratitude for aiding us in protecting her own interests! The phrase became current that 'France had taken the chestnuts out of the 'fire' for England (alluding to the well-known fable), and we were placed in a false position. The fiction about Constantinople being the 'key of India' had the chief part in this misrepresentation, and possibly without it public opinion in England would never have been enlisted in the Crimean war.

It is on that account worth while here to examine the only conditions under which a Russian invasion of India would be really practicable, and by what route Russian armies would probably effect it. Such an examination will make it very clear, first, that Turkey does not lie at all on the Russian route: secondly, that peace, and not war with Turkey, would be a necessary preliminary to a Russian invasion of India: and, lastly, that our success in the Crimea has in no sense retarded the advance of Russia towards our Indian frontier, but the contrary.

The first glance at the map of Asia tells us that a march from any point in civilized Russia to our Indian frontier is one which has no modern parallel. In ancient times a Sesostris or an Alexander could effect such a march, but we don't know much of their commissariat, and we do know that they had no artillery, and may fairly suppose they had no ambulances. In our own days we have some knowledge of the almost incredible cost and labour of conveying a very small army from our Indian frontier to Cabul—but a short stage of the

Russian journey. We know that we had to convey not only the usual *impedimenta* of an army, but *fuel* and *water* also, for a considerable journey. We know that one division of our army alone lost 9,000 camels in that service, and we know that without our exceptional commercial credit in Asia we never could have collected the required means of transport. And this, it must be remembered, was an expedition to Afghanistan only.

Now we may assume that when Russia does undertake to confront us on Indian soil she will pay us the compliment of considering us as more formidable than Afghans, and that to meet some 80,000 British soldiers, backed by twice as many natives, Russia will send at least an equal army, with all the artillery and material required for an European campaign. But looking at the question as simply involving the transport of so many men with the corresponding material over so many hundred miles of rugged roadless country, we may say that the physical and financial difficulties would exhaust the resources of Russia. Nor are we without the means of forming an opinion upon the point from actual experience; for the Crimean war furnishes an example. All the world now knows that the immense extent of purely Russian territory through which the supplies and reinforcements for Sebastopol had to be transported, drained the Treasury, consumed all the accessible means of transport, and left the nation weary and exhausted.

If, then, the far smaller operation of supplying Sebastopol overtaxed the powers of the Empire, what must be the inference as to the gigantic task of a four-months' march * to India? Setting aside all considera-

* Supposing a Russian army to cross the Black Sea to Poti, to march thence to Baku on the Caspian, to cross that sea to its south-east corner, and then march to Samarcand and thence to Peshawur, the *land* distance, measured straight upon the map without reference to deserts, mountains, or other obstacles, would be, roughly, 1,750 miles. Taking

tions of the resistance which might await a Russian army in Hindostan, it might be almost said that the certainty of success would not justify the enormous cost of life, money, and material. But that which at the present moment, and under existing circumstances, might be impossible, need not always be so, and the Russian route to India through Central Asia may one day become not only practicable, but even easy. It has features which might in time be turned into facilities, but are at present immense obstacles.

The fact is, that the greatest revolution in the science and practice of strategy has been made by a man whose name never occurs to us in connection with military affairs. A plain, hard-fisted, energetic Northumbrian has made great operations of war practicable, which were not so before. If 250,000 Germans could sit down to the siege of Paris, confident that their daily supplies, drawn from a hundred leagues' distance, would never fail them, it was to George Stephenson they owed it. The roads of France would have become impracticable in that terrible winter; the draught cattle would have perished; all the carts and waggons would have been destroyed in supplying, not only the daily wants of such a host, but in dragging the huge guns and their ponderous missiles. Yet the 'iron horses' never wearied, nor failed; fed from Westphalian mines, they sped on their journeys over the metal roads, dragging with equal ease the monster Krupp gun and the black-bread loaf of the soldiers.* In the same way, when the Allied armies of the Crimea stuck fast in the mud of Balaclava, it was

the route by Balk, it would be 1,550. An army marching continuously fifteen miles a day would take 103 days for the lesser distance. The two sea voyages, with embarking and disembarking, would occupy the remaining seventeen days. But the actual distance to be marched is far greater, and the day's march, where there are no roads, would be far shorter. There might be an enemy in the path moreover.

the invention of Stephenson that extricated them, and his untiring horses that took the place of the poor skeletons no longer able to drag a load. But much more needful to Russia will be the invention of Stephenson on her Eastern march. The weary expanse of desert, which would swallow up an army, would, when traversed by railway, be the easiest part of the journey, and, in fact, few obstacles exist to the construction of good military railroads where at present there are not even horse-tracks.

As Stephenson originated the railway system, so another class of Englishmen turned their minds to executing the necessary works. One of that class, who died lately (Mr. Brassey), could have done more towards transporting a Russian army from the shores of the Baltic to the Himalayas than Generals Paskiewitch and Todleben, even if assisted by the Von Moltkes and Von Roons of the Prussian Staff. To Mr. Brassey it would have been a mere calculation in the way of business as to what railway works would be required to complete the river, sea, and lake communications between Russia and India, so that a Russian army, without losing a man by fatigue, or wearing out a pair of boots, could embark at St. Petersburg and quit his railway carriage in sight of the Himalayas. To such a man the construction of all the needful works, the dredging and deepening the course of rivers, the building of wharfs and piers, would have been merely a question of time and money. He would have given in his estimates and asked no more from the Russian Government than a small force perhaps, of light troops, to escort and protect his surveyors, or any workmen too far in advance of the permanent posts.

As the difference between an invasion of India made by such means and a mad attempt to push an army through trackless wastes, and for some thousand miles,

without securing its communications, would be enormous; as India, even if acquired, would be comparatively useless until good military and commercial communications were established, we may fairly suppose that Russia will take for her motto, like the Emperor Augustus, '*Festinâ lentè.*'

That she will some day or other—if she does not extend her frontier westward—be in a position to invade India, is a fair inference from the progress she has made already, and especially since the Crimean War. It is worth examining, therefore, what are the geographical and political difficulties or facilities in her way.

The first point would be to fix upon the base or bases from whence the main line of advance to India would start: a place that should not be too far from the object aimed at, and should be in easy communication, by steam, with the military and commercial centres of the Empire. Of course it should be safe from hostile attack, and on a scale of sufficient importance, not only to supply barrack accommodation for a large army, but the stores and magazines, the bakeries, the factories, and workshops required for production and repairs—in fact, for the innumerable demands of an army in the field.

In 1854 Russia had hardly any railways, except those in her western provinces, communicating with Warsaw. She can now convey troops and material by rail from Archangel on the White Sea, by St. Petersburg and Moscow, to Odessa on the Black Sea, and by another line branching off eastward near Kherson, to Azof on the sea of that name. From Moscow, again, a railway running east strikes the great River Volga near Kasan, whence it is navigable to Astrakhan on the Caspian. Thus the towns and ports of the Black Sea and the Caspian are at present in steam communication with the two capitals of Russia, with its centres of

production and population, with the Baltic and Western Europe. Either Odessa or Kherson on the Black Sea, or both together, might be regarded as fulfilling the necessary conditions of primary bases of operations. Assuming them to be so, the first portion of the Russian route would be by sea to Poti, and thence south of the Caucasus to Baku on the Caspian, by a railway now in progress. Or, if the route of the Volga be taken to Astrakhan, that important town on the Caspian might be considered as the basis of operations, and adapted to the purpose by establishing all the necessary works. From either or from both bases the Russian advance would be mostly through their own territory, and, unless a quarrel were picked with Turkey, entirely safe from the interference of European Powers.

Two travellers, one English, the other Russian, have, during last year, given their personal impressions as to what Russia is doing and may be expected to do in order to establish practicable military communications with points near our Indian frontier.

Mr. A. H. Mounsey,* who seems to have received every civility and assistance from the Russian military officers engaged in surveying the district through which the first part of the railway system would pass, tells his readers that that line will connect Poti on the Black Sea with Baku on the Caspian (about 450 miles). Arrived at that point, a Russian expedition would have before it a passage of 400 miles, or 40 hours, to the south-east corner of the Caspian, and would then have completed nine-fifteenths of the whole distance from Odessa to India. It would have made its way so far through practically Russian seas or Russian territory, and be but about 1,000 miles from our frontier in a straight line.

It will be observed that this route, so far from requiring possession of Constantinople as the 'key of

* *The Caucasus and Persia*, by A. H. Mounsey. 1872.

'India' (the last thing that Russia probably thinks of in that connection), presupposes the neutrality of Turkey, if her alliance could not be had. As that neutrality might probably be obtained at the expense of a very small amount of ink and such judicious use of secret-service money as Russian diplomatists understand, it would cost less than a war with Turkey. But if Russia could not reckon upon Turkish neutrality in the Black Sea and its southern shores, she has an interior line of communication with the Caspian safe from all interference.

Referring to the intended railway between Poti and Baku, Mr. Mounsey says, 'When this is terminated 'Russia will have a line of steam communication from 'Odessa and her southern European provinces to the 'port of Astrabad at the south-east corner of the 'Caspian Sea.

'With the prospect of soon possessing the whole of 'Turkestan and Tartary by the acquisition of the 'Khanats of Khiva and Bokhara, and the vast steppes 'which separate them from the northern frontier of 'Persia, the Russian Government must be most anxious 'to complete this railway, which will form the most 'important link in a long chain of projected steam 'communication with those distant regions. Steam-boats, 'at present touching at all the ports on the southern 'shore of the Caspian, run from Astrakhan to Ashorada, 'a small island belonging to Russia at its south-east 'extremity. Were the Caucasian railway and port of 'Poti completed, all the trading operations of Europe 'with the northern and eastern provinces of Persia 'would inevitably follow this route, instead of being as 'at present carried on by means of caravans of camels 'and mules, which tramp wearily up and down the 1,100 'miles between Teheran and Trebizond.'*

* Pp. 17, 18.

Mr. Mounsey elsewhere tells us, 'Another line of 'steamers is to be established between Astrakhan, 'Baku, &c. and the north-east corner of the Caspian, 'whence, according to General Romanoffski, who com-'manded in Turkestan for some years, three roads are to 'start eastward. One will be carried from the bay of 'Krasnovod along the old bed of the Amoo-Darya to the 'Sea of Aral. . . . . From the Sea of Aral steamers will 'eventually run up the Gihon or Syr-y-darya, and thus, 'during summer, or so long as the Volga and Syr-y-darya 'are navigable, St. Petersburg and Odessa will be in 'direct steam communication with Khojend. Troops 'may thus be moved from the Volga to Turkestan in a 'fortnight, and the army of the Caucasus will become 'the army of reserve for that province, and Russia will 'find what she professes to be the only object in these 'Central Asian conquests, a vast outlet for her manu-'factures.'

Mr. Mounsey is no alarmist, and looks at matters in a commercial and geographical point of view, mentioning the advance of Russia incidentally rather than as the object of his book.

The fact is, that Russia is approaching our Indian frontier by two lines of communication at least. If she entertains any definite designs on India, she looks forward no doubt to the completion of railway and water communication between Russia and some points almost in sight of the Himalayas. In peace those lines would be commercially useful; for invasion they would be indispensable, and in the event of complete success they would add immensely to the value of India as a Russian possession.

The Russian authority referred to, E. Gryf Jaxa de Bykovski,* seems to be a Russian M. Lesseps, who

* *Le Tour du Monde en* 66 *Jours, et de Londres et de Paris en* 4 (?) *Jours aux Indes par la Russie.* Par E. Gryf Jaxa de Bykovski, Membre

proposes to do (with our help) by a railway what M. Lesseps hoped to do by his canal—give a rival and possible foe a short-cut to our Eastern Empire. He also has travelled over the proposed line of communication and given the world his ideas upon our prospects. They are not reassuring, if we may believe him, and it may startle most Englishmen to hear that he computes the present distance between the Russian advanced posts and our Indian frontier at just 100 leagues, or 300 miles, say one-eighth the distance from Constantinople. Even that distance he considers is daily decreasing. But M. Bykovski's league must be very long, or he places the Russian outposts farther in advance than they would for the present like to find themselves. He thus gives his views upon the duties of the British Government in the East:—'Since Samarcand and Bokhara have become 'Russian provinces; since a distance of 100 leagues 'now separates the Russian Empire from India, and that 'distance is daily diminishing: the Government of the 'two civilizing Powers in the East ought to be impelled, 'not to the counteraction of each other's efforts, but 'rather perhaps to a common action.' If M. Bykovski counts his 100 leagues from the farthest corner of what he calls the Russian province of Bokhara to the nearest corner of the Punjab—that is, from a point near Kooshlip on the Amoo to another near Bahoor in Peshawur district—the distance is indeed under 300 miles. As yet no permanent Russian stations are so far advanced as the south-east frontier of Bokhara. It is very possible, nevertheless, that they may be so in another year or two.

Bykovski suggests—for pacific purposes—a line of railway communication *through Russia* to connect London and Paris with India, and ultimately with China. So

de la Société Géographique de Paris. 1872. His nationality is only inferred to be Russian from his name.

far from thinking it should pass through any part of the Turkish dominions, he would take it not only to the eastward of the Black Sea, but even of the Caspian. Starting by the existing lines through the long stretch of flat country in Northern Germany and Russia, passing just north of Warsaw to Saratov on the Volga, thence skirting the north-east point of the Caspian to Houngrad on Lake Aral, the line would run through Khiva and Bokhara to Balk, or following the Jihoun (or Aksurrai) to Koondooz.

So far this traveller sees no difficulty, physical or political, though he appears with some geographers to consider Balk in Bokhara, and not in Cabul, where the Ameer would place it; but it has been said, with some truth, that there are no boundaries in Central Asia. It must be remembered that the Russian Lesseps regards the proposed railway as a pacific enterprise, by no means adverse to English interests; yet he glances at the political and military question in passing, and, as a recent observer, his remarks have some importance.

In Central and Eastern Asia, he observes, there are but three great empires—the Chinese, the Anglo-Indian, and the Russian. The small independent States of Cabul, Herat, Kandahar, he considers, have an aggregate population of 4,200,000. The smaller States between Peshawur and the Oxus he takes at 500,000 only. 'Further on, and always in the direction most interesting to us—for it is the line we propose, 'and a little past Balk—on one side we find Bokhara 'and Khiva (following the course of the Oxus), provinces not yet completely annexed to Russia; while on 'the other side we find, in the direction of Samarcand, 'the River Sir Darya, already part of Russia. Near 'Balk the Oxus, too, begins to be navigable.' He gives to Bokhara a population of 2,000,000, many being 'Jews tyrannized over by the Mussulmans.' Khiva is

inhabited by hordes of Uzbeks and Tartars, not exceeding 2,500,000.

'The maritime frontier of India is open to invasion. 'The rich capital of Bombay, with 900,000 inhabitants, 'has no important fortifications, and could not resist a 'few ships of war. To the north-east, India, protected 'by the Himalayas, is inaccessible; but to the north-'west, though the neighbouring country is mountainous 'and presents great difficulties, nevertheless it has been 'crossed by the armies of Alexander, Sultan Mahmoud, 'Tamerlane, in 1397; Baber Sultan of Samarcand, in '1525, who gained the great battle of Paniput, and 'proclaimed himself Emperor of Delhi; finally, by the 'troops of Nadir Shah, in 1739.' Bykovski considers the engineering difficulties of carrying a railway over the Hindoo Koosh as great, but not exceeding the skill of these days. As it is not likely that we shall undertake that feat for the benefit of Russia, or permit her to do so if we can help it, the point is not important. What is important is that Russia now understands the conditions under which alone any serious invasion of India could be attempted by her. Bykovski considers the subjugation of Central Asia as the 'manifest destiny' of Russia, but looks to the railway engineer and the merchant as the principal agents in that conquest. Nor does it admit of much doubt that, excluding the many unforeseen events which may occur, the progress, fast or slow, of Russia toward the south-east, is as certain as that of the United States to the westward. The slower it is the more likely will it be to prove solid, and to demand from England a firm and decided policy of counteraction. Nor must it be supposed that if England has the will she is without the means of making her power felt in Central Asia. In no part of the world, perhaps, excluding maritime districts, could she act more decisively or over a larger area. Strongly entrenched, as it

were, beyond the Himalayas, she represents to the Asiatic mind, not only an enterprising and victorious race, but a people who can richly reward their friends as well as punish their foes. There is not a state or tribe from our frontier to the Black Sea, whose power to resist Russia we might not double at a merely nominal expense, or which we might not, if needful, organize in a general league against her. We have but to decide upon the limits beyond which we should consider the advance of Russia as dangerous to our Indian Empire, and to tell her firmly that, overpassing them, she must reckon upon our uncompromising resistance. The means adopted would not necessarily imply hostilities in *Europe;* for they might be no more than the resistance forced upon us in Asia by the Russian encroachments on that continent. But very little knowledge of our Indian history, and of the wild, fanatic Mahometan races in Central Asia, will suggest the means by which we could raise a conflagration on each flank of the long line of communication extending from the Black Sea to the Himalayas. The first of these tribes—the Circassians—resisted the might of Russia for years, though armed only with matchlocks, without power of range or accuracy of fire. No Central Asiatic tribe is properly armed, led, or endowed with more of military science than mother-wit supplies. But England could arm, organize, and instruct the best of those wild populations. No other Power has the same experience in creating and disciplining irregular corps; none enjoys a greater prestige among those who would form them. When the moment arrived, that Indian school of arms which never failed to produce the men that were needed—that school which could out of the 'gentle Hindoo' make a wide-conquering army, but could also *crush* that army, whatever its superiority in numbers, when it mutinied—where is the evidence that that school has degenerated?

That our army in India, issuing from the mountain-passes of Afghanistan and advancing with a good basis of operations through a friendly country, would meet a Russian force advancing by a long and exposed line of communication at a great advantage, can hardly be denied. The camel-drivers, the muleteers, the owners of draught-oxen, all the natives on whom the invader depended, would be constantly deserting, many of his foraging-parties would be cut off, and to the fanatically hostile population resistance to the Muscovité would be a holy war. We know by a sad experience what such a war implies. We thought ourselves well established in Cabul, when a fanatical outbreak suddenly swept away a whole army, and inflicted upon our military reputation in India the only stain it has known. What happened to ourselves in cantonments would be more than likely to happen to Russia at the end of a long march. It is not men and material only that waste away in distant expeditions. The *roubles* that pass through many hands are apt to stick here and there, the morality of officials decreasing as the distance from St. Petersburg increases. The civil and military pioneers of Russian progress in the far East would probably remember themselves, but forget the Czar.

Upon the whole, then, while the extension of Russian power over Central Asia seems inevitable, if unopposed, England has great means of opposing it, nor should it be forgotten that between the present and the apparently inevitable future lies the large territory of the unforeseen.

One thing is perfectly clear from the above sketch of the Indian route which nature and circumstances point out to Russia, and which she is steadily following. It does *not* lie through Constantinople. That capital may be perfectly safe from Russia, and India in great danger, or Constantinople quite safe, while a Russian army debouches from the Himalayas.

While England feels apprehensive for her possessions

in the far East, Austria dreads Russia on the Danube, Germany dreads her on the shores of the Baltic, and even Sweden has some fear on the side of Finland. Each may be right as to her individual danger, but all cannot be so. A country may, like water, overflow with effect in one direction, but if it overflow in all, its strength is soon exhausted.

How, then, it may be asked, is England interested in the Eastern Question, and the safety of Constantinople? Not certainly, as already said, because it is the 'key' or the 'bulwark,' or in any way the defence of India, and not therefore as being called upon to take the lead in defending Turkey. There are other considerations no doubt which would make the establishment of Russia at Constantinople undesirable for England, but not so undesirable as it is for the Mediterranean Powers.

The interest of England in preventing the occupation of Egypt by any rival power is of course both clear and paramount, especially now that the Suez Canal makes Egypt more than ever our route to India. To insist that no European power should have the means of passing a military expedition through the Canal and closing it (a very easy matter) against our pursuit, is obviously not more our interest than it is our right. That is, for England at least, the essence of the Eastern Question, and were Russia installed at Constantinople to-morrow, so long as England held Egypt, it would not affect the safety of India.

Assuming, then, that in no case will any British Minister, worthy of the name, allow any country to place itself *à cheval* on our communications with India, as M. Lesseps proposed to place France, how far is England bound to defend Turkey in Europe against Russia?

By the additional articles to the Treaty of Paris in 1856, 'Austria, France, and Great Britain unite in a special guarantee of the independence and integrity of

'the Ottoman Empire. All infractions of the treaty in 'that direction will be considered a *casus belli*.' But the ministerial explanations given in both Houses of Parliament a few years since, as to the effective obligations of joint guarantors, reduce them to very small proportions. It may be assumed that those authoritative expositions of international law were correct, and it may be well for England that they should prove so. According to that interpretation a joint guarantee binds the guarantors jointly; but not severally, and if one signatary of such treaty of joint guarantee fails to perform his part, the other signataries are absolved from their obligation. As it might well happen that in any future Russian aggression upon Turkey, France may refuse to join in enforcing the Treaty of Paris, either from financial or political reasons, England would then be released from her obligations. Of course the wording of each treaty must decide the obligations of the signataries, and it would be as impolitic as dishonourable in England to shrink from any duty, however onerous, imposed upon her by treaty. But assuming that the legitimate construction of the treaty confines its operations to the joint action of the signataries, ought England, where free in her choice, to engage in war with a colossal Power for the sake of Turkey?

To say that this or that evil would result from a Russian conquest of Turkey is not by any means decisive. Other countries besides Turkey are threatened by Russia, and we should consider their conquest a very great evil, but should not go to war to prevent it. Perhaps at present, though no country is particularly menaced, Austria engages more attention in the military speculations of Russia than Turkey herself. It is said to be a Russian maxim that a favourable solution of the Eastern Question can only be sought at Vienna, and the opinion is at least plausible, since Austria would be more certain to come to the aid of Turkey than Turkey to come to

the aid of Austria. Mistress of Vienna, Russia would impose terms upon the Porte. Would England then engage in the defence of Austria? Hardly, it may be replied. It is a question of degree, then, how far England (irrespective of treaty obligations) is more interested in the safety of Turkey than that of Austria. Closely examined, the policy of engaging in a great European war for the sake of preserving the 'integrity of the Otto-'man dominions,' is not so plain as to make it popular in England. It has been mixed up with the safety of India, with which it has hardly any connection; but when that illusion is cleared up, a British Minister may find it hard to drag England into a war if France holds back. As French neutrality in such a case is no improbable contingency, it may be said that the Eastern question has entered into a new phase, for which England should be prepared with her own settled and avowed policy. The old belief in the importance and the practicability of keeping the Ottoman Empire upon its legs, in defiance of a dwindling population and increasing debt, and an apparent incompatibility with all modern ideas of government, is sensibly weakened. For one modern writer who, like Slade Pacha or Mr. Palgrave, believes in the undiminished vitality of Islam, there are certainly two who say that at least in Europe it is an anachronism and an evil. A positive evil, as subjecting Christian populations to rulers of a lower grade of religious, moral, social, and physical civilization; and negative, as keeping a most highly favoured portion of Europe down to the Asiatic standard of advancement. If England be morally tied to that effete, moribund body, so much the worse for England, for the Christians of Roumania, and for mankind. But at least we should know more certainly why we are so bound, and whether there may not be other means of obtaining the ends in view. It is the more necessary to do so now that the Eastern question has,

without any English interference, entered upon a new phase, in which we can no longer reckon upon French co-operation, as in 1854. It is not meant that the solution of the Eastern question, although different on that account, must also be more difficult; in fact, no *solution* was possible while the pretensions of France remained what they were, except one in a sense exclusively French and directly opposed to British interests. Europe could calculate the policy of other Powers, because in each case it would be based upon intelligible interests and traditional maxims. All men knew what Russia desired, and why she desired it; they knew equally well why Austria and England opposed Russia and upheld Turkey, but in the case of France there were empty phrases, meaning anything or nothing, and covering unavowed pretensions far more dangerous to British interests than the avowed designs of Russia. It was thus that French statesmen and writers, under the foolish phrases of 'A country that must ever remain 'associated with French glory,' 'The glorious traditions 'which unite France to Egypt,' 'The land moistened 'with French blood,' expressed the idea that France had some peculiar claims to Egypt. If the facts that in remote ages a French king, more saint than soldier—though no bad soldier either—invaded Egypt, got captured, and had to ransom himself, or that Bonaparte lost a French fleet and an army there, established such claim, what would more successful feats have done? But these foolish dreams of vainglory and ambition do not affect other nations, and Russia would be far less jealous of the legitimate rights of England in Egypt than France always showed herself. Those rights are of the most practical and intelligible description. Would it be impossible to come to an understanding with other Powers about them? Would it be impossible—as has been attempted in the more immediately pressing case of

the Russian progress in Central Asia,—to come to a friendly agreement with Russia herself?

At the present moment the relations between Russia and Turkey are known to be friendly, whether because the Turkish pear is supposed to be ripening, or because Russia hopes—as is not impossible—to make gold do the work of steel. In either contingency, if Russia be established in the Mediterranean, it will become the clear duty of England to secure her route to India through Egypt, not by violence or robbery, but by a fair bargain. Possibly the sovereign rights of the Sultan, including the tribute payable by Egypt, might be bought by England, or if not the tribute, (which England might guarantee to the Sultan), a Firman conferring such rights as the enormous English interests involved would justify. For it is to be remembered that those interests imply the safe communication between these islands and our 180,000,000 fellow-subjects in India, which is no matter of sentiment but one of common sense. Of course, the commercial rights of all nations should be fully secured; but the very possibility of another country, as, for instance, France, sending an armed expedition through the Canal, and then, by sinking a ship here and there in the channel, or blowing in the banks by mines, baffling pursuit, should be prevented. It was only the loss of our old naval prestige that encouraged Napoleon III. in supporting the scheme of M. Lesseps, and it is a reflection upon our foreign policy that it weakly allowed that scheme to be carried into effect without taking any precautions for our own security.

Assuming that for a time at least French policy is likely to be less active in the East and Russian influence greater, some new element would be required to preserve the former balance of power. That element would be found in the safest and most conservative form in the action of the new German Empire assuming its legitimate

position as a great naval power in the Mediterranean. To that section of Englishmen which regards Germany with suspicion, and anticipates all manner of dangers, possible and impossible, from her, this may seem undesirable; but, apart from any national characteristics, it is almost a necessary result of circumstances that the action of Germany in the Mediterranean should be pacific and conservative in the same sense as that of England. Neither Power can desire to make that sea their own 'lake.' Neither has any pretensions to protect the Christians in the East, or to found absurd claims upon precedents of the Crusades. To keep the sea open to the trade of all nations, and if possible to prevent any overwhelming preponderance of Russia or France, or any dangerous alliance of the two, would be the obvious interest of Germany as it is of England. No jealousy would prevent Germany acknowledging the obvious fact that English interests in India, being incomparably greater than those of all the other Powers together, need greater protection. It is not in the character of the Germans to feel that envy of others, nor has she any precedent of aggression to mislead her. Uniting with Italy, Austria, and England, Germany would complete a defensive alliance sufficiently strong to repress the usurpations of any one Power, and when the time came for solving the Eastern Question Germany might prove its true solvent.

It is, in fact, to a firm union between Germany, Austria, Italy, and England that Europe might look for the most effectual means of preserving the general peace. Such an alliance might justly pretend to a control over Europe, which, if claimed by any single Power, would be arrogant and offensive. Just as the claim of an individual to interfere between disputants as a matter of right would be intolerable, so is the claim of a single nation that 'no gun shall be fired in Europe without its 'consent.'

If there be any single Power fit to exercise such an authority, it assuredly is not France, nor is it an authority which Europe should admit. But an alliance of powerful and pacific States, having no pretensions to encroach upon their neighbours, might very legitimately claim a right to keep the peace of the Continent,—might do so on the sufficient ground that, occupying the geographical position they do, any war would be a detriment and a danger to them.

Such an alliance, occupying a broad belt of the Continent, from the Baltic to far south in the Mediterranean, would constitute the strongest bulwark against the encroachments of Russia from the east or France from the west. So also in the Mediterranean it would offer the best guarantee, not only of the will, but the power to settle the great question so long pending in an equitable international manner.

To rob the Sultan because he is weak would never meet with the approval of England, but to purchase at a fair price, rights which are more showy than substantial, or territory which he might part with to his benefit in more ways than one, may ere long become as practicable as it is desirable. That Russia should in such case meet with fair consideration, and that her wishes should be conceded so far as not demonstrably dangerous, is only reasonable. It is equally just that each Power should be protected in its legitimate interests against the increased strength of Russia, supposing her to acquire the footing in the Mediterranean which she naturally seeks. Whether that foothold should comprise Constantinople, if the Sultan consented to terms, which would of course imply a very heavy pecuniary payment; or whether that 'queen of cities' (now sitting in filth and rags) should with Roumania form a neutral State under a European guarantee, it is not pretended here to decide. If the latter—which seems the most feasible—Russia and

all other nations might have free passage for their ships of war through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Russia might also either acquire by purchase the Island of Scio, or possibly arrange, with her protégés and co-religionists the Greeks, either a protectorate or annexation, of that unpromising kingdom.

Nothing but a powerful confederacy, such as has been sketched, would have the force or the pecuniary means of carrying such arrangements into effect if made, or of making them in a spirit of justice to all, rather than advantage to the strongest. There is certainly nothing unreasonable in supposing that the Cabinets of Germany, Austria, Italy, and England could devise a scheme for giving to all the Powers interested as much as they are fairly entitled to in the East, without doing wrong to the Ottoman Empire.

How vast would be the change if those glorious lands, gifted with everything but good government, and capable of attracting the wealth and enterprise of civilised Europe, enjoyed the security which an enlightened rule would confer upon them! The beautiful shores of the Bosphorus alone, and the neighbourhood of Constantinople no longer the abode of filth and fever, might, if sold as building sites, go far to repay the purchase-money at the present value of the land. That capital, which has not even a decent road leading to it, would be connected with the provinces by railways, and the country which has lain under a curse of sterility and misery for 400 years, would become what Nature intended it to be.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

It has been the first object of the previous chapters to prove that the political, or, more correctly speaking, the military domination of France has been a giant evil to continental Europe, including France herself, and in a less degree to England also.

The second object has been to show that the transference of the first place in the European system from France to Germany neither involved any moral wrong nor any detriment to the general interests of Europe.

The third proposition contended for, and upon which it remains to add some further considerations, is the advantage that would result from the substitution of a strong alliance between several Powers for the supremacy of one.

If these propositions be established, it follows that the Anglo-French alliance, in so far as it contributed to support the domination of France, was detrimental to the general interest. In truth, it would be hard to say how far that alliance did, unintentionally on the part of England, conduce to the arrogant, domineering policy of France. Before, however, stating the strong reasons in favour of the close alliance suggested between England, Germany, Austria, and Italy, it may be well to recapitulate briefly the points which have, it is hoped at least, been established.

An English writer and public speaker whose political

penetration and foresight has been singularly accredited by events, thus expressed himself lately on the recent war :—

'1870, however, and the commencement of 'the year that followed it, will be rendered for ever 'memorable by the gigantic war which freed Europe 'from the incubus of French militarism and put an end '(let us hope for ever) to the absurd boast, "When '"France is satisfied, Europe is at peace." Of course 'it is very desirable that France and all other countries 'should be satisfied, but it is intolerable that any country 'should advance the pretension to which I have referred. 'The Liberal cause has gained no greater victory since 'the Crimean War than it did when the influence of 'France as a disturber of all men's peace received a 'long *quietus*.' . . . 'Before 1870 she (France) had long 'said all she had *as a people* for the present got to say to 'the world, and had fallen far behind her adversary in 'intellectual vigour, in acquired knowledge, and in com-'prehension of the spirit of the time.' The speaker might have gone further (and probably would agree in this view) than saying that the 'Liberal cause' had gained: every cause involved in the primary conditions of civilization, security of life and property, must have gained, when the only country that made war from vainglory and levity was chastised and humbled. Europe needed no other evidence against France than her own boast, that the lives and welfare of her neighbours were held at her whim and pleasure. To hold them *durante bene placito* under any other people were bad enough, but that neighbouring nations should be told that their tenure of life and all that makes it desirable depended upon the humour of the least stable, most vainglorious and impulsive people in the world, must seem abhorrent to every sane mind. Were there insurance-offices for nations, it is probable that Belgium, Prussia, Baden,

Switzerland, and Italy might insure their lives at a much lower rate now than before 1870.

To say this would seem to be enough and more than enough, were there not Englishmen who still contend that Germany has usurped the place of France, and who think that French domination (which did not extend to England, however) was a *benefit* to Europe. The truth is, that France, with her genius, quick intellect, and refined taste, is like the element Fire, according to the proverb, 'A good servant but a bad master.' There are those, however, who say that France will not—nay, ought not—accept a secondary plan, especially since territory has been taken from her. 'We must first reconquer our 'position and our provinces, and then we may *honourably* 'make peace.' Frenchmen, even, those who acknowledge the iniquity of her late aggression, hold this language. They may perhaps learn some day that it is nobler to forgive than to avenge, when we ourselves have done wrong.

> 'Tis nobler to forgive, even as He forgives
> Our trespasses, than to avenge like angry man.'

Two stories—one known to all English children, the other to most Parisians—seem to the purpose, and may be excused here:—

A certain youthful Prince of Wales in former days (when 'a divinity did hedge a king' with a vengeance), having indulged in riotous conduct with his young companions, was brought before the Chief Justice, but forgot the respect due to that high functionary. The Chief Justice, holding the law in more reverence even than the heir-apparent, committed him to prison, and the high-spirited youth, feeling he had done wrong, went submissively to gaol, as the humblest peasant might have done. 'Ah le misérable! si c'eût été le Dauphin alors!' . . . Perhaps so; but that Prince afterwards met the French Princes with all the might of France at their

back, and gave them too good reason to remember the meeting. 'Ah! bah!' That Prince was crowned King of France. 'Impossible!'

Another tale:*—When the Germans occupied Paris in 1871, a French sentry posted at the Tuileries having, according to his orders, refused to admit a German officer, that officer very improperly tried to force his way. Thirty thousand German soldiers were close at hand, but the French sentry adhered to his orders none the less. The German officer fell dead, transfixed by the sentry's bayonet, and the German soldiers rushed to the scene to avenge their officer. Learning the facts, however, they only said the sentry had done his duty, and the officer deserved his fate.

Frenchmen will appreciate the faithful soldier and possibly the German witnesses who respected his sense of duty. Can they apply the story to a nation that, having lost its own liberty and sense of justice, attacked a neighbour unjustly and reaped a due reward?

Briefly; if aggressiveness, vainglory, ignorance, levity, and love of change, all stimulated by evil traditions, be the proper qualifications for a dominant position in Europe, France has the best claim to it. If otherwise, then has Germany rendered to all nations the greatest service recorded in history. Still farther, if Germany has rendered any return to Napoleonism impossible, France is even more indebted to her than are other nations.

There may be some, however, who, admitting what seems impossible to deny, that France has been the danger and the scourge of continental Europe, will deny that to England she was other than a good ally. As that point, which must be decided by history, has been discussed at length in the 'Retrospect of the Anglo-French Alliance,' it is unnecessary to travel over the

* The story appeared in the English papers at the time, and not having been contradicted, may be assumed to be true.

same ground, but two considerations are suggested by the facts. It would not follow that because France had acted well to England it would be right to support a French domination that was oppressive or perilous to other Powers. Neither would it necessarily be for the honour or the benefit of England that she should purchase the alliance of any nation by acting a constantly subordinate part. The French theory—unexpressed of course, but acted on—of the Anglo-French alliance, was, that in all differences with other European Powers, England should accept the advice and share the policy of France, but that France should reserve to herself and exercise the right of making war upon all Europe in defiance of English advice. Thus France had attacked three of the Great Powers, and one only with the consent of England. It is by no means certain that an English attack on Spain or Italy without the sanction of France would not have been made a *casus belli* by her.

It was a very simple course, which neither over-taxed our diplomacy nor made it necessary to manage our naval affairs well, to follow in the wake of France, as we did more or less during the Second Empire. England may have shut her own eyes to that fact, but other nations did not. The loose way of speaking of France as 'our ally,' which in strict language she was not, any more than the Power she attacked, came to identify English policy too much with the exceptionable course often taken by France. Those who trace the decline of English influence to the events of 1870 might look for its cause at an earlier period.

The question naturally arises here, Whether, granting the unfitness of France for the place to which she aspired, there is evidence of the fitness of Germany? It is not contended here that to any single Power can an absolutely dominant position be safely entrusted. But to say that

Germany is fitter for that great responsibility than France is not saying much. That subject has been incidentally treated before, but it may be here briefly repeated that the *Germans*—not the Prussians singly—are not by nature a *military*, though a brave and martial people. Neither tradition nor vainglory, nor yet idleness and love of licence, lead them to prefer war to peace. An ungrateful soil and cold climate demand all the efforts and thrift of its cultivators, who have found the military demands of the State too burdensome even in peace. The love of family and habit of early marriage, the capacity for labour, the high standard of education, and the thoughtful religious turn of mind, are all German characteristics inclining to peace.

Of Prussia it is true that so much cannot be said. Without going the length of the *soi-disant* German author of *La Tyrannie Prussienne*,* it may be admitted, as already said, that 'militarism,' to use a word of recent coinage, has flourished, and is still strong, on Prussian soil. But admitting the fact, it does not follow that what was a necessity formerly, and is so no longer, will continue. To build up that strong kingdom which was to be the backbone of Germany and to rescue her from dependence, the Electors of Brandenburg had a rough task before them. Only by a strong military organization could that task be performed, and after the electorate had become a kingdom, the aspiring structure was levelled to the ground at Jena. The ungenerous tyranny of the First Napoleon upon that occasion stirred the very depths of Prussian manhood and patriotism, and prepared the righteous retribution of Sedan. But the necessary work of Prussia had been done in 1866, and though France

* *La Tyrannie Prussienne, par un Allemand.* Paris, 1872. Whether the anonymous German belonged to that nationality or to France may be a question, but his hatred of Prussia is, perhaps, more French.

forced her to do more in 1870, there is even in Prussia a feeling that enough has been done for security now. There, as elsewhere, the democratic, the industrial, and perhaps the plutocratic spirit is gaining ground. The military conscription is felt to be too heavy; it is driving thousands to emigrate. The patriotism that responded so nobly to the summons of 1870 for a defensive war could not be so easily engaged for one that was aggressive. France was the recruiting sergeant of Prussia, and it is a Frenchman * who tells us that 'France is in this respect 'the whole strength of Prussia.' It is the same high authority which tells us 'Prussia will have been the 'powerful instrument employed by Germany to deliver 'herself from the menace of a Bonapartist France.' . . . And further on he adds, 'It is that which makes me say 'confidently, Prussia will pass away, but Germany will 'remain. Now, Germany left to her own instincts is a 'liberal and pacific, even a democratic nation, in the 'legitimate sense of that word. I believe that the science 'called social will owe to Germany signal improvements, 'and that opinions which with us have assumed the 'hideous garb of democratic socialism will there be deve-'loped in a beneficent and practical form.'

This testimony to the peaceful disposition and social capabilities of the Teutons, coming from such a source, must have great weight; and it is strengthened by reference to the past. History does not tell us that Germany, since the time when 'the Emperor's' vast and ill-defined pretensions begat jealousy and strife, has been an aggressive or arrogant Power. It may be added that with the gigantic power of Russia on one side, and a jealous, vindictive France on the other, peace is the obvious interest of Germany. Assuming this, the geographical position of Germany is obviously that which the dominant (Conservative) Power should occupy.

* Ernest Renan, the intimate friend of Strauss.

There are, however, those who do not believe that Germany will be able to retain her present position when France has recovered from the blow of 1870. They expect to see what, in their eyes, is the natural state of things restored. But, setting aside the facts of history for the moment, it is not easy to see why a military supremacy should naturally belong to France more than Germany. The German population is neither less brave, less robust, hardy, or persevering. It is equally numerous, and, what is more important, is rapidly growing, while that of France, as shown by the last quinquennial census, is actually decreasing. And though the small diminution may have been accidental and exceptional, the almost stationary condition of the French population has long been admitted and deplored.* In intellect, education, love of order, respect for authority, capacity for discipline, the advantage is not on the side of France, and her military prestige, once her chief strength, is gone.

History, indeed, until 1870, was, on the whole, on the side of France; but then there was no Germany, properly speaking, opposed to her. Germans generally fought on both sides, or some remained neutral while the others were overwhelmed. Thus, at Austerlitz some of the South German States allied themselves with France, and Prussia remained neutral; while at Jena Prussia was left alone to contend with all the might of France. It was constantly divided Germany against united France. It is, moreover, to be remembered that,

* The author of *Nos Malheurs, leurs Causes, leurs Remèdes* (Amédée Leblanc, a Legitimist,) assigns six causes for the misfortunes of France,—the fifth being 'la stagnation dans l'accroissement de la population due à deux causes principales: 1°, le suicide de tout ceux qui font des excès; 2°, la revoltante coutume de n'avoir qu'un enfant—le plus sanglant des outrages envers Dieu, la nature, et la société.' M. Leblanc speaks of this as something undeniable and well known.

while Frenchmen have emblazoned their triumphs in painting and sculpture, and celebrated their victories in prose and verse, Germans have not cared much to commemorate even a Rosbach. Probably, at this moment, when Germany has swept the whole French army, Emperor, Field-Marshals, Generals, and guns, into her net, she has fewer trophies in eagles and colours of her enemy's than that enemy has of hers in Paris.* In the same way, though history tells of naval successes won by our Rodneys, Howes, St. Vincents, Nelsons, &c., of several French admirals captured with their flag-ships, of other prisoners many, and of ships not few, it would be vain to look for a single French naval ensign in London, though of English ensigns many are still displayed in Paris.†

But, however it may have been in past times, it is of importance to know that the great nation occupying the centre of Europe is likely to be able to hold her own in the future. From geographical position, the defence not only of the peace of Europe, but of Western civilization, may depend upon Germany, and her weakness would be a general danger and misfortune.

We hear much of the vast armies which Germany and Austria, and prospectively France, will be able to bring into the field, but we hardly realize the fact that Russia will shortly be able to outnumber the united

* The French at Sedan threw their eagles into the river or otherwise destroyed them, as is their custom; but of course the Germans, if they cared to do so, might legitimately substitute others. If the Eagle represents the regiment, it is taken with the regiment; if it represents the military honour of the regiment, it cannot be saved by being thrown into cesspools or smuggled away under the clothes of a cantinière.

† It is not generally known that, though after the great French war a vast number of French flags, taken in general actions and single encounters at sea, waved under the dome of St. Paul's and elsewhere, every single one disappeared. All were secretly removed. One can only guess by what agency.

armies of all three. Or, if we accept the figures, we are apt to say—as we might have truly said some years since—that the lower civilization and proportionally smaller financial resources of Russia demand a large deduction from these figures. But the Russia of to-day is no more like the Russia of the Crimean War than France of 1763, at the close of the Seven Years' War, was like the triumphant France of 1798. What the Revolution did for the down-trodden population of France, the emancipation of the serfs by the present Emperor has done for Russia. In both cases the nations had been virtually enslaved, and the change from serfdom to freedom was a new life and resurrection, a complete renovation of the whole national being. Such changes, too, it must be remembered, always produce the greatest effect at first, and just now Russia may be said to feel the invigorating effects of the first draught of freedom. A British poet makes his hero strengthen himself for civil strife by emancipating his serfs, who are described as—

> 'Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
> 'Defying earth and confident of heaven.'

In the same way—and most wisely—the Czar has, amidst other preparations for the great future which every Russian believes in, abolished slavery throughout his wide dominions, and changed the listless serfs into loyal and devoted subjects. So vast has the effect been, that among the advantages reckoned upon by Russia for any future war, she counts some which none would have looked for except in the freest countries. Russian writers of authority assert that four-fifths of the vast empire might be wholly denuded of the military, the defence of order being left to the *volunteers*. That force (the exclusive boast of England formerly) now exists in a more permanent and fully-organized shape in Russia. 'It is not forgotten in Russia that the Moscow muni-

'cipality in 1863 proposed to organize a guard of the 'inhabitants, to admit of all the troops being sent to 'the frontier. For the defence of her borders, in addition 'to her standing army, Russia disposes of a popular 'armed power which is supplied in England by the 'volunteers, by the militia system of Switzerland and 'of America, but which is unknown to the other countries 'of Europe. The latter dare not place arms in the 'hands of their citizens, unless they have been converted 'into soldiers.'* This extract, which is given as 'the 'cultivated Russian opinion' by the Reviewer, and said to be 'not far from the truth,' implies a greater change in the whole military, civil, and social status of the Empire than any other circumstance in the general sketch given under the head of 'The Military Policy of 'Russia.' But it may be permitted to quote further from an article which summarises the views, military and political, of some of the best Russian authorities.

We are too apt, perhaps, in England to think of Russia as being dangerous to the independence and integrity of Turkey alone, whereas there is reason to think that the aggressiveness formerly directed against that State is now much more menacing to Austria, or possibly to Germany.

'At the same time we hear from various quarters 'that, for the present at all events, the Eastern Question 'is held in Russia to be closed. The Russian Govern- 'ment stands now, as regards the Black Sea and its 'power of asserting a hostile attitude towards Turkey, 'nearly in the position it occupied before the Crimean 'war, with the advantage, however, of a superior military 'organization and a system of railways. Her views are 'not now immediately directed towards Turkey. She 'has achieved a successful diplomatic campaign.'†

It is, however, upon another quarter that the dark

* *Edinburgh Review*, No. 273, p. 13. † *Ibid*, p. 38.

and ever-accumulating thunder-storm of the Military Empire, whose population doubles that of any other in Europe, threatens to burst.

'From this the province of Poland stands forth as 'a great bastion of offence directed against the breast of 'Europe. It threatens alike Germany on the one side 'and Austria on the other. The consistency of policy 'and the tenacity of purpose which have characterized 'the Russian Government and Administration since the 'days of Peter are visible in the manner in which the 'theory thus stated is being executed in practice. The 'expenditure in support of the schemes for the strate-'gical connection of the provinces is without limit—this 'being apparent in the completion of the first-class for-'tresses, in addition to the railway-system, which convert 'Poland, on an immense scale, into such a quadrilateral 'as that which maintained Austria in a position of 'successful defiance towards Italy. . . . It may be 'mentioned that the Russian fortresses have received 'every improvement that could be suggested by the 'genius and experience of Todleben.'

Elsewhere, in the article quoted, there is given, on Russian authority, confirmed by Captain Brackenbury, proofs of the extraordinary renovation of Russia, the enthusiastic spirit of loyalty and union, the wonderful military organization of the whole empire with its immense resources, no longer separated and dispersed, as in 1854, and above all the systematic and avowed preparations for aggression. The picture is one of a vast military empire in that stage of civilization and of moral culture which has no scruples of conscience as to the lawfulness of war, and which is, in several respects, best able to support it, without deranging a too complex and advanced social and political system. Nor must it be supposed that in the general advance of Russian power and prosperity her finances have remained what they

used to be. 'Her revenues have increased in an extra-'ordinary manner, her expenditure having, however, year 'by year; exceeded her annual resources. Notwith-'standing her chronic deficit, no country in Europe, and 'indeed it might be said, or in America, displays a more 'rapid increase of wealth and all that serves to produce it. 'This is proved alike by the statistics of domestic and 'foreign trade.'

Such is the Empire uprising in the fervour of its new-born liberty, patriotism, and military ambition. Obeying the traditional instincts of the Eastern nations, it faces West, and awaits the hour when the command to move Westward shall be given. At that command a force doubling the hosts which subjugated France, would cross the Prussian or the Austrian frontier, and if at the same moment France advancing from the west joined in the attack, never would the prospects of civilization have been more imperilled. 'All,' says the article quoted above, 'who have made themselves acquainted with Russia on 'the spot, speak with bated breath of the immense 'organism now developing itself before the eyes of 'Europe.' It is not, let it be again said, the Russia of 1854 with which Germany and Europe would have to deal, any more than the conquering Saracens who invaded that continent were the wandering tribes from which they sprang. What the ultimate issue of such an invasion would be, none can judge, but that its progress would be disastrous for humanity none can doubt. That the Germans would fight with all their well-proved courage and dogged resolution, we may be sure; that they would defend their hearths and homes against the vastly superior numbers of Russia, even aided by France, with desperate tenacity, is certain; but blood would flow like water, the country would be devastated, and civilization thrown back many years. Nothing more pitiable, nor repugnant to humanity, than such a war, can be con-

ceived. On the side of Russia it would be the realization of a long-conceived policy of aggression, quite in harmony with the lower civilization to which she has at present attained. On the part of France it would be the satisfaction of vindictive feelings, of the natural desire to recover her losses without much reference to ulterior consequences. To the other continental Powers it would be that 'letting out of waters,' of which none could calculate the disastrous end, though its attainment would imply indefinite bloodshed, misery, and ruin.

It does not follow, however, that the designs of Russia, though steadily and systematically pursued up to the present time, may not be altogether baffled or much changed by unforeseen circumstances. All that can be affirmed,—and that on good Russian authority,—is that she regards an advance upon central Europe as the main object of her military policy, because it involves the solution of the Eastern, and indeed of all other Russo-European questions, in a sense favourable to her views. It is believed by German statesmen, that the Emperor Alexander is personally inclined to peace, and not ill-disposed towards Germany, but that it is otherwise with his eldest son. Disquieting rumours also prevail as to a serious constitutional malady of the Emperor, which might hasten the fulfilment of aggressive designs.

As the true interest of continental Europe lies in opposing such a design, so it may be safely assumed does the interest of England. The warmest partisans of an Anglo-French alliance would hardly desire that England should incur the hideous guilt and responsibility of favouring, even in the slightest degree, a Russian attack upon central Europe, though made with the consent and co-operation of France. No sentimental preference, no tradition of recent policy, could absolve England from the duty of shaping her own course in the future, independently of all considerations but those of justice and

honour, which it is here contended will be found to coincide with her true interests. It was a bad result of the Anglo-French alliance (little observed perhaps at the time) that it weakened the national sense of reponsibility and enervated British diplomacy by accustoming it either to follow the lead of France, or, where that was impossible, as in the Mexican and German wars, to remain passive spectators. On the last occasion (1870) the infatuation of France and the valour of Germany saved our policy from a very inglorious end or a fatal catastrophe. When France, in defiance of our advice and wishes, attacked Prussia on a false pretext, we (like all the other Powers) remained neutral, and against that neutrality there is nothing to be said. But the previous policy of England in abetting Napoleonism did not leave her blameless in respect of its results. Liberal and Constitutional England had in 1830 very intelligibly and naturally allied herself with Liberal and Constitutional France, but why Liberal England again allied herself with *despotic* Napoleonic France in 1851, remains unexplained. In any case our Napoleonic ally, as was perfectly natural, walked in the paths of Napoleonism, and in 1870, attacked the third great European Power—happily for Europe, unsuccessfully. But had the result been different, we should have seen Napoleonism triumphant and Europe prostrate, as the result of the Anglo-French alliance.

Providence through German valour averted that difficulty for our diplomatists, and has thrown on them, perhaps not too soon, the duty of devising a British instead of an Anglo-French policy. Now it must be admitted that if there be any clear recognized principles or objects in support of which men of all parties in England would accept the arbitrament of war rather than yield, it would be well they were generally understood. Is there a British policy so clearly just and expedient that it would

unite the whole nation in going to war, not 'with a light 'heart' like the hapless M. Ollivier, but at least with a clear conscience?

It is assumed that in defence of her territory, her national honour, or her own direct rights and interests, England would at any time draw the sword. Foreigners who doubt it should remember the case of the Confederate Commissioners captured in the Trent. If there is any Power that England would rather not fight, it is America, and yet all England, without exception, was ready to fight on that occasion if satisfaction had been refused. Nor was it any momentary irritation, but a calm, quiet, sorrowful, yet firm resolve, as all the world, including America, fully understood.

It is not, therefore, as to whether England would resent an insult or vindicate her own individual rights, that there is any question, but as to whether there are any fixed principles upon which she would intervene, when the rights of others, indirectly involving her own, were assailed.

There are two extreme theories on the right of intervention to defend what may be called indirect rights, neither of which would find favour in England. The first was held by M. Thiers, when, in 1840, he said that, in a case where Europe differed from France upon a point affecting all the Powers alike, and attempted to act without the concurrence of France, he would go to war with all Europe to enforce the views of France. That was another version of the claim that 'no shot should be fired 'in Europe without permission from the Tuileries,' and was a species of arrogance repugnant to sober English thought.

The other extreme theory may be said to have obtained in Holland, by a reaction from more ambitious pretensions, and to have consisted in strict abstinence from all interference in the policy of other Powers, or in having no foreign policy at all.

In seeking the golden mean between these extremes, it may be assumed that all Englishmen agree that British policy should be based on truth, justice, and reason: that it should be such as we believe a perfectly competent and impartial arbiter (if such could be) would approve. Any policy aiming at acquiring advantages for England through wrong done to others, would be unworthy of her high and fortunate position, which enables, nay, requires her to be true and just. In her case, it may be said, in the most literal sense, that 'honesty is the best policy,' and, without any sentiment or optimism, it may be believed that by a persistent course of perfectly truthful and honourable conduct England would attain immense influence in Europe, and that many differences would be referred to her arbitration. Not, however, if she forgot that it is only the strong nation which gets any credit for justice, moderation, and other pacific virtues. The British Government that neglected the national armaments would lessen the influence of England abroad as much as her security at home. The ideal England must first be strong as Nature intended her to be in making her an island abounding in good harbours, richly gifted with coal and iron, and, more valuable than either, a hardy, brave, laborious, and orderly population. Nothing prevents England from being at least invulnerable at home except a misconception as to the true purpose and nature of the Admiralty department, which we are too apt to regard in its peaceful rather than its warlike duties. If we only want a department that can 'make things 'pleasant' in the House of Commons, it is easy to form one. We had such an Admiralty under 'able administrators'*

* In 1830, Sir James Graham, then without any official experience whatever, was made First Lord of the Admiralty, and declared to be an 'able administrator;' but his talents, though great in abolition, always fell short in construction. He abolished our only educational institution for naval officers, our only school for naval architects, our only

for several years, and things were made pleasant enough politically, but for any except political purposes it had lost its value. The wretched state to which our navy had been reduced for some years by bad administrators, worked its own remedy, and we have not seen a repetition of such mismanagement. But the bad effects survived for many a year in the not unsuccessful French rivalry, which has cost so many millions to both countries. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the British public, which takes our naval supremacy at all times for granted, that twice of late years the French navy acquired an actual preponderance in efficient force for a time. Even at the present moment it is a simple delusion to suppose that our ironclad fleet would be a match for that of France, aided by any second-rate naval Power. An article in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1873, puts this in so clear a light that, taking into account the character of the writer and his means of knowing all the facts, if such authority is not decisive, no other can possibly be so.

Assuming, however, that it comes to be understood that the essential object—one might almost say the only use—of an Admiralty is to ensure us an absolute and constant preponderance at sea,* the first condition of our policy can be easily satisfied. We shall have an invulnerable position at home and an influential position abroad. It remains to be considered to what account should that position and influence be turned in accordance with enlightened opinion in England.

school for shipwrights, our Marine Artillery, our only available home forces; but he utterly failed to find any substitutes. He and his successors in five years reduced our peace navy far below the French in efficiency.

* It may be asked in what sense such preponderance is meant, whether over any one foreign navy or over how many? Common sense seems to require that our fleet should be able to combat successfully those of at least any two hostile Powers. Possibly, as our *all* is at stake, we should be able to resist any three coalesced navies.

It will be admitted that to preserve the peace, which is indispensable to the welfare and happiness of Europe, is a legitimate object for the policy of England, and one which affects her own interests as one of the brotherhood of nations. Although the pretension to interdict any war which they disapproved is a piece of arrogance that Englishmen would certainly condemn, it may still be contended that no Power which attacks another unjustly could complain if a third Power came to the rescue. But such a right of interference is a different thing from its expediency, and the practical sense of Englishmen leads them to regard most intervention as inexpedient. To be expedient, armed intervention should be likely to prove effectual, on which account, while Lord Palmerston was willing to intervene on behalf of Denmark in conjunction with France, he was unwilling to do so when she refused. The 'strong France,' said to be a 'European 'necessity,' proved of little use on that occasion. In 1870, again, when the conscience of England condemned the French aggression, and would have required her to take part with Prussia if she interfered at all, there were, perhaps, prudential reasons for neutrality. Had France, however, succeeded in her unjust designs, England could hardly have remained in alliance with a country vigorously following up the very policy against which English arms and diplomacy had gloriously contended in the beginning of this century. The Anglo-French alliance would have become impossible, and others would have become necessary.

While the geographical position, character, and traditions of France would render her absolute domination on the Continent more dangerous for England than that of any other Power, it may be affirmed that in no case would the dictatorship of a single State be desirable. The question then arises, what is the best substitute under present circumstances for such

dictatorship? Could the power, dangerous in the hands of a single State, be safely entrusted to those of two or more? and, practically, do such States now exist under circumstances insuring their friendly co-operation?

It certainly does appear that by a fortunate concurrence of circumstances there are now four Great Powers whose interests should lead them to coalesce in support of the peace and general welfare of Europe.

A glance at the map of the Continent shows us in the East the 'Russian Colossus' extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and gathering up all her strength for the fulfilment of what she regards as her 'manifest 'destiny.' It would probably give no offence to Russia to say that she does not desire the continuance of the present state of things, and must be regarded not as among the Conservative, but as one of the disturbing elements in Europe.

Turning to the opposite side of the map, we find a Power in the West that, until 1870, considered itself in military strength more than a match for the Colossus, and claimed to be the arbiter of Europe. Of that country —France—it would also be no injustice to say, on her own authority, that for the present, while looking forward to a war of revenge, she must be considered a disturbing element.

Between these two elements of disturbance, and extending in a broad belt from the Baltic to the Adriatic, lie the two Empires of Germany and Austria. Upon them the guardianship of the peace of Europe is thrown by geographical position and political circumstances, no less than by their own interests. It can scarcely be denied that both are deeply interested in the maintenance of peace, since each has at least one vigilant and ambitious neighbour, with whom aggression is only a question of time and opportunity. That Germany is bound over to keep the

peace by the perpetual menace of Russia on one side and France on the other, need hardly be argued. It is true, that Russia did not avail herself of the opportunity offered by the war of 1870, but no inference as to the future can be drawn from that fact. It was not her interest to make France (not long since her enemy) omnipotent in Europe if successful. Russia, like the rest of Europe, was neither aware of the hidden strength of Germany, nor the unsuspected weakness of France, and could not at that time have desired alliance with her. The pacific character of the Emperor Alexander had, we may also suppose, its influence, but with his life that influence would expire; it is well understood that German statesmen do not rely upon Russian forbearance beyond the present reign. With the dark thunder-clouds, therefore, that menace Germany from both sides, it may be fairly assumed that her policy is pacific, and the warlike designs attributed to her, merely imaginary.

The position of Austria is very similar to that of Germany, and equally counsels peace. Russia is a danger to both, and, moreover, has not, it is known, forgiven what she considers the ingratitude of Austria in 1854. If Turkey be the objective point of Russian military designs, Austria is the covering army to be disposed of, and the solution of the Eastern Question might be easy after occupying Vienna. There is, moreover, the eternal Pansclavic policy to embroil the two countries. It may seem superfluous, however, to argue that Austria will follow her pacific traditions.

The same reasons which would deter Germany and Austria from general aggressiveness would tend more powerfully to dissuade them from going to war with each other. To do so would indeed be suicidal. It is true that Austria might be supposed to harbour some resentment for Sadowa, but she has probably learned that the apparent losses of 1866 have been more than compensated

by the better understanding between the different races composing the Empire. Austria, moreover, is not vindictive, and she probably feels that peace is to her a necessity. Germany, again, could not attack Austria without danger of an attack from two other quarters. Thus the two Great Powers occupying the centre of Europe are from their own interest that which the general welfare requires them to be—conservators of the peace. They are pacific, but, at the same time, strong enough *when united* to resist the aggressive forces in the east and west. An alliance between Austria and Germany is the obvious interest of both.

Contiguous with Austria in the south, and completing a Conservative cordon, is the young and interesting Italian Kingdom, with its intelligent people and its growing prosperity. It is beyond dispute that the interest of Italy is bound up with the maintenance of peace. Her finances and internal organization require it, and she has nothing to gain by war. Her danger is only from the side of France. That M. Thiers, and those who think with him that the military glory of France is the first interest of mankind, look with no goodwill on united Italy, has been publicly declared. It is not improbable that the reactionary party in France would seek a quarrel with Italy, nor that when the hour of the 'revanche' approaches, a preliminary trial of the French arms may be made at her expense. It is against her weaker neighbours that France is likely to direct her first efforts. It would be the interest of Italy, therefore, to cast in her lot with Austria and Germany.

And what, is it contended, would be the interest and duty of England in reference to the pacific league shadowed out? Surely it would be to throw the whole weight of her influence into the same scale, and to lend her utmost assistance in its formation. Surely, if there be one high and useful function of diplomacy, it is to

devise guarantees of peace, such as the union of nations strongly interested therein would offer. Could a more useful or honourable position be found for England than that of founder of such a league?

Experience may tell us that wars will come, and that perpetual peace is but a dream of benevolence. Yet who will deny that to defer war for a generation is an immense benefit to mankind—that it is for *that* generation the realization of the perpetual peace dreamed of? In a less degree, to defer war for half or a quarter of the days of one generation would be a real triumph of diplomacy. There does not appear to be any reason why a defensive treaty between the countries that are from present circumstances most interested in preserving peace might not be made for a *limited period.*

We may suppose that Austria, Germany, Italy, and England join in an alliance to be binding for four or five years: that they bind themselves, in the first place, to refrain from aggression as between themselves, and to accept the decision of the majority in any dispute: that they further bind themselves not to attack any extra-federal Power, and to defend each other against any aggression from without.

If such an alliance secured its object, it would be a great gain, and, even if it failed, it would imply no loss or injury. To say that such treaties have been made before and have failed, is to prove nothing, unless the circumstances were exactly the same, which is in the highest degree improbable, indeed historically and morally impossible. If successful the treaty might be renewed.

At the present moment there are exceptionally favourable circumstances for such a league in the relations of certain States to each other, and the strongest motives for making the effort in the circumstances which threaten a not distant renewal of bloodshed.

Those whose judgment during and since the war of 1870 has been unfavourable to Germany, or whose sympathies are decidedly French, may feel some repugnance for a German alliance. Those again who, mistaking the expressions of particular newspapers, such as the *Kreuz Zeitung*,* for the national voice, find therein proofs of German ill-will towards this country, think it would be unworthy of England to seek the friendship of a country so ill-disposed towards her. But England ought, in the first place, to attach more weight to the interests of the kingdom and of Europe than to sentiments, whether of good-will or the contrary; and, in the next place, were it true, which is by no means admitted, that Germany in general is ill-disposed to England, it would be fair to ask whether we gave her reason to be so.

As to the merits, judging politically, of the two nations lately engaged in war, that question has been fully discussed, and if the views already expressed be correct, the Germans have some right to complain of England. But without assuming so much, it must be conceded that great allowance should be made for a belligerent who believes that a neutral has judged him unfairly, and been wanting, moreover, in the duties of neutrality. The Germans know as well as we do that their sons and brothers often fell by an English bullet, fired out of an English rifle by English powder, all sold to France by Englishmen for gain. But many Germans do not know the immense legal, commercial, and other difficulties which make it impossible to prevent the direct or indirect

* After much importance had been attached to a recent article against England in the *Kreuz Zeitung*, on the assumed ground of its quasi-official character, the following contradiction appeared in *The Times*: 'With reference to the article which we last week quoted from 'the *Kreuz Zeitung*, we are glad to be assured, on the best authority, 'that this journal in no way represents the policy or sentiments of the 'German Government.'—*Times*, Jan. 28, 1873.

traffic in arms or ammunition.* They think that with the will we could have found the means.† Their irritation must have acquired force since the Alabama Arbitration, wherein, while equally contending for the perfect *lawfulness* of our acts, we so framed the terms of the arbitration as to ensure having our lawful acts condemned and punished. One 'new rule,' instead of three, as to the duties of neutrals, would have sufficed to entitle Germany to compensation.

If, then, some irritation still exists against England, we may fairly hope that it will soon die out where there are no divergent interests and no rational causes of jealousy or ill-will on either side. Whatever ambitious or hostile designs our imaginations may have attributed to Germany, we must admit that, since her great victory at Dorking, she has not molested us, nor could anything but extraordinary incompetence in our naval administration lead to a repetition of that sad catastrophe. Many years must pass before the German navy can be anything like the danger to us that the French navy has been, and, in the meantime, there is the more practical question of the choice of continental allies.

If it is desirable that England should not be entirely isolated, her choice of allies among the great Powers practically lies between France on the one hand and Germany on the other: between France in all the

* That point was made very clear by Earl Granville in his correspondence, by citing the case of Prussia herself during the Crimean War, when, in the legitimate course of trade, and certainly with no ill-will to Russia, she supplied us with *Russian* naval stores.

† One question will ever recur to the minds of the belligerents who have not very carefully considered the whole question, as to the difficulty of preventing such traffic in arms and ammunition. 'Would the 'British Government,' they ask, 'be unable to prevent the Birmingham 'gunsmiths from keeping up a rebellion in Ireland by supplying arms 'to the rebels?' Of course the answer is easy to those who have studied the question—not so to the ordinary German soldier.

turmoil of change and reconstruction in the present, and looking to a war of revenge in the future, and Germany, deeply interested in the peace of Europe. Beyond sentiment, it is hard to say what should unite England to France, but there are patent grounds for an alliance with Germany; nor is there anything in the national character or traditions of either country to prevent it. There is also the important fact that ere long, in the course of nature, a British Princess will share the throne of the new German Empire—a Princess not more the object of our loyal respect than of our national affection and regard, for the hopes which her high personal qualities inspire. If in Russia the accession of the heir-apparent is looked forward to as the signal for war, it is the contrary in Germany, where, as is well known, the Prince Imperial is as fond of peace as he is distinguished in war. If, then, the peace and happiness of Europe be the first objects of British policy, it is in a German and not a French alliance that we should seek it.

The alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy have been adverted to, not more in the interest of those Powers than that of Europe at large, and if England should by joining them form a quadruple alliance for the preservation of peace, that blessing, it may be said, would be almost secured. The alliance would rest upon such natural and obvious grounds as to need no mutual sacrifices or difficult negociations, and beyond the immediate objects, would facilitate the solution of many questions for the general good. In the face of such a pacific yet all-powerful league, Russia could not attack any of her neighbours, and the Eastern Question could not be solved by her sword in her own behalf. Civilization would be safe from the peril that now threatens Western Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and that danger—with the concomitant one of a Russo-French

alliance—being conjured, the nations might consult as to lessening the intolerable burdens of the present armaments.

It is well known that, in some of the continental States, military service is becoming a yoke too heavy to be borne. In parts of Germany it is driving the people into emigration. In France the conscription, always a hardship, fell, through the operation of the law of substitutes, into a system of purchasing the services of those who were willing to serve; but that is now at an end, and a vigorous, undiscriminating compulsory service will try the patience of the people to the uttermost. That population, which during the last five years has actually decreased by above 300,000 souls, will now be subjected to a double drain, and while the number of producers will be lessened, the taxes on wealth produced will be increased, so as to inflict a double hardship and injury.

Now, supposing that, after a short trial of the quadruple alliance proposed, it were found to work well —and there does not appear any reason against its doing so—is it not conceivable that the separate armies might be reduced, the general or federal army making up for such reduction by its aggregate strength? The united forces of the four Powers may now be taken at three millions of men, counting the additional military value of the British navy as making her contingent equal to 500,000. Might not one-third at least of the total forces be dispensed with? Without going into details, some relief to the suffering millions of Europe seems to be possible by these means.

In any case, in one shape or the other, a confederacy of the four conservative (in the pacific sense) Powers of Europe seems to be a practical, safe, and natural substitute, so far as England is concerned, for the precarious and somewhat perilous Anglo-French alliance now termi-

nated by events. It is not, however, as a league in any sense hostile or unfavourable to France that it is here contemplated. That France should ultimately be comprehended in such general alliance would be most desirable, but at present it would not suit her views or feelings. It would not, however, be more beneficial to any State than to France herself, who in an impassable rampart without, would see the best argument for confining herself to her own territory, and devoting herself to that task which common sense points out as her first duty and interest. France might recover Alsace and Lorraine this day, and yet be disorganized, distracted, and 'occupied' even in her capital, by worse foes than the Germans. She might, on the other hand, leave to Germany the old German frontier,* and not only become far happier, wealthier, and more contented, but absolutely stronger. It was wholly irrespective of the million and a half of subjects lost to France in her forfeited provinces that her population was diminished by above 300,000 souls, instead of increased by three times that amount. To find the cause and the remedy of this decline, is more essential to France than to attempt the recovery of two provinces at the certain expense of many years' income, many young lives that can ill be spared, and the very great risk of total, irrecoverable ruin. But M. Thiers would think otherwise. To him France, if not Napoleonic, is nothing, and the Legend must be revived though France should perish. It might be said of that fine country, so favoured in every respect, so suited to be the paradise of the ingenious and amiable people to whom Providence assigned it, that one restriction only was laid upon the French Adam sent into that garden to till it, 'Shun a

* It is not generally known, and was very recently communicated to the author on good authority, that the new frontier follows very nearly — in some places absolutely—the boundary-marks of the old German Empire.

'vainglorious policy.' Subject to that restriction France might have been safe, respected, happy beyond all other nations at home, and a blessing instead of the scourge of Europe. Could she but realize the fact that she has gifts which could make her what no military virtues ever could, and that she might through those gifts make friends where victory could only make fresh enemies, all her disasters might be turned to gain. But with all her genius and all her gifts, France has the very defects which fatally disqualify her for the position she most covets, the arbiter of Europe. Until she realizes that fact, or until misfortune has corrected her fault, it is not the interest of England to renew the late alliance.

For the present, at least, the safest and most natural alliance for this country would seem to be with the kindred race of the sober and steady TEUTON, rather than the bright and amiable but too volatile and vainglorious GAUL.

APPENDIX.

Extracted from the 'NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW,' *April*, 1872.

THE Article which reviews M. Benedetti's book, *Ma Mission en Prusse*, gives the early history of the now famous Belgian Project, substantially as it has been given in Chapter VI. It recounts the interview between Benedetti and Bismarck, before the return of the former to Paris, early in August, 1866, which ended with this remarkable warning from Von Bismarck: 'Please to call his Majesty's attention to this. Should a war 'arise out of this complication, it might be attended by a 'revolutionary crisis. In such a case, the thrones of the German 'dynasties are likely to prove more solid than that of the 'Emperor Napoleon.'

After this conversation Count Benedetti returned to Paris. On the 12th August the Emperor's letter was published, in which matters were smoothed over. It was only after the Mayence question was thus disposed of, that the Belgian Project was brought forward. This was done through the means of a letter dated August 16th, which M. Chauvry brought to Count Benedetti from Paris, and which contained an accurate and precise abstract of his instructions. This letter of instructions contains the whole gist of the matter, and settles the whole question in dispute. The instructions were as follows:—

'1. Negotiations are to preserve an amicable character.'

'2. The negotiations must be strictly confidential.' (Then follows a list of the persons to whom the confidence of the Ambassador is to be confined.)

'3. In proportion to the chance of success our demands will 'have to be graduated as follows:

'In the first place you have to combine into one proposition 'the recovery of the frontier of 1814 *and the annexation of* 'Belgium. You have therefore to ask the extradition, by formal 'treaty, of Landau, Saarbruck, Saarlouis, and the Duchy of 'Luxembourg; and you have to aim at the annexation of 'Belgium, by the conclusion of an offensive and defensive treaty, 'which is to be kept secret. Secondly, should this basis appear 'to promise no result, you will resign Saarlouis, Saarbruck, and 'even Landau, which is but a dilapidated nest of a place, the 'occupation of which might excite German national feeling 'against us. In this eventuality your public agreement will be 'confined to the Duchy of Luxembourg, and your secret treaty 'to the *reunion* of Belgium with France. Thirdly, in case a 'clear, unmistakeable reference to the incorporation of Belgium 'should *be found unpalatable*,* you are authorised to assent to a 'clause in which, *to obviate the intervention of England*, Antwerp 'is to be made a free port.

'In no case, however, are you permitted to allow the reunion 'of Antwerp to Holland, or the incorporation of Maestricht with 'Prussia. Should Herr von Bismarck put the question, What 'advantage would accrue to him from such a treaty? the simple 'reply would be, He would thereby secure a powerful ally; that 'he would consolidate his recent acquisitions; that he was only 'desired to consent to the cession of that which did not belong 'to him; and that he makes no sacrifice in any way to be com-'pared to his gain.

'To sum up, the minimum we require is an ostensible treaty 'which gives us Luxembourg, and a secret treaty, which, stipu-'lating for an offensive and defensive alliance, leaves us the oppor-'tunity of annexing Belgium at the right moment, Prussia 'engaging to assist us, if necessary, by force of arms, in carrying 'out this purpose.'

These instructions, which bore date August 16th, were answered by Benedetti the 23rd of the same month. The reply is declared by Bismarck to be, 'like so many other interesting 'documents of the same kind,' in the handwriting of Benedetti. It is now in possession of the German Foreign Office. It con-

* This passage of course, even by itself, disposes of the allegation that the suggested annexation of Belgium came from Prussia. If it had, how could it 'be found unpalatable' to her?

tains a draft, also in Benedetti's handwriting, conceived *in strict accordance with the above instructions.* On the margin of the draft are sundry amendments added in another hand at Paris. *The revision agrees perfectly with the famous 'Project' published by Count Bismarck last year.* In a letter accompanying the draft of August 23rd, Benedetti explains the reasons of some alterations which he had ventured to make. Landau and Saarbruck had been omitted. He assures the Government that he had had occasion to convince himself that they would encounter insuperable difficulties, were they to insist upon those places. He had accordingly confined himself to Luxembourg and Belgium. He had also deemed it better to have a single treaty instead of two.

To this letter of Benedetti's there is also in the hands of the Germans a rough sketch of the reply. It is written on official paper, and shows that Benedetti's draft had made a favourable impression. It alludes to the necessity of indemnifying Holland for the loss of Luxembourg by means of Prussian territory. It considers the pecuniary sacrifice that might be necessary in carrying out the treaty. It asserts that the Prussian right to garrison the Federal fortresses had become extinct, and that to maintain it in Southern Germany would be incompatible with the independence of the South German States. It renounces Landau and Saarbruck, but says that Prussia is expected to perform an act of courtesy by destroying their fortifications, and divesting them of their threatening character. It repeats the declaration that the acquisition of Luxembourg is the immediate object of the convention, and the annexation of Belgium its ulterior aim. Then follows this passage:—

'It is obvious that the extension of Prussian supremacy 'across the Maine will, as a matter of course, compel us to seize 'Belgium. But the same necessity may be brought on by other 'events, on which subject we must reserve to ourselves the 'exclusive right to judge. In this respect the clear and exact 'wording of the *draft* is of inestimable value. . . . This com- 'bination reconciles all parties. By giving us an immediate 'satisfaction in setting people on the right scent in regard to 'the disposal of Belgium, it quiets public opinion in France.* 'It maintains secresy concerning the alliance as well as the

* That is, in the opinion of the French Government, the French people would be greatly pleased by an unprincipled robbery and perfidy to an ally.—THE AUTHOR.

'contemplated annexation. If you think that the annexation 'of Luxembourg had better be concealed until we lay hands on 'Belgium, I should be obliged by your giving your reasons in 'detail. You will perceive that to suspend the beginning of 'operations for an indefinite time might result in bringing the 'Belgian question to a premature close.'

To this communication from Paris, Benedetti writes in reply on the 29th of August. Now for the first time he expressed a doubt whether France could count upon the sincerity of Prussia. He thought that Bismarck suspected France of attempting to sow discord between England and Germany. He refers to the mission of General Manteuffel to St. Petersburg, and expresses the fear that Prussia has received assurances from another quarter, 'which will enable her to dispense with the countenance 'of France.' He states that Bismarck professes to have told the King that Prussia must have the assistance of one Great Power. Should the co-operation of France be declined, it will be solely for the reason that the Berlin Cabinet is otherwise provided for, or hopes soon to be. He concluded by declaring that, in the uncertain state of affairs, he had determined to go to Carlsbad, as he had been authorised to do if he should find it necessary. . . . .

Prince Bismarck closes his chapter of revelations in the following characteristic manner:—

'But we have no wish to indulge in disclosures beyond those 'imperatively required for defensive purposes. We accordingly 'confine ourselves to the correcting of statements which might 'occasion erroneous ideas as to German policy. Until forced 'to resume this task, we shall resist the temptation to make a 'more undeserved use of the copious materials at our disposal.'

The defiance, or rather the challenge, with which Count Bismarck closed his letter has not been accepted by Count Benedetti. The Ambassador has not denied the genuineness of the documents. On the contrary, he is represented as expending his indignation upon his old friends that they neglected to inform him of the captures of Cerçay.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell in detail upon the motives which induced Count Benedetti to enter into this course of misrepresentation. The first publication of the 'Project of 'Treaty' in 1870 placed France in a trying position. The

Ambassador knew that some—at least in France—would regard his word as of equal value with Bismarck's. He knew, moreover, that the Prussian Government had no means of proving the falseness of his allegations. He, therefore, determined to array his assertion against that of his enemy. Having once entered upon the path of misrepresentation, there was now left him no choice but that of either confessing his falsehood or pushing on concealing or inventing, as there might seem necessity. Supposing that M. Rouher had taken good care to destroy the documents which in the interest of France ought never to see the light, it was not difficult for him to decide upon his course. He wrote a narrative that is full of indignant virtue. He offered to the world a satisfactory account of all that happened in the matter. He carefully concealed all that could be arrayed against him. He omitted to publish his correspondence. Finally, with a grand climax of audacity, he assigns as a reason for such omission a virtuous unwillingness to bring forward a single witness who could not be cross-examined, when, in fact, he well knew that, if these witnesses were to be brought on the stand, it would be for his instant destruction. We cannot but add that, even if ingenuous, the motive which he assigned for his reserve would pass for what Horace so well characterized as 'prave pudens.' As the truth has been revealed, there seems to be more than poetic justice in the fact that by the very letters thus concealed he is finally overwhelmed.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00027429

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018